BRITISH SCHOOL OF ARCHÆOLOGY IN JERUSALEM
SUPPLEMENTARY PAPER 4
1937

CHURCHES AT BOSRA AND SAMARIA-SEBASTE

BY
J. W. CROWFOOT, C.B.E., F.S.A.
LATE DIRECTOR OF THE BRITISH SCHOOL

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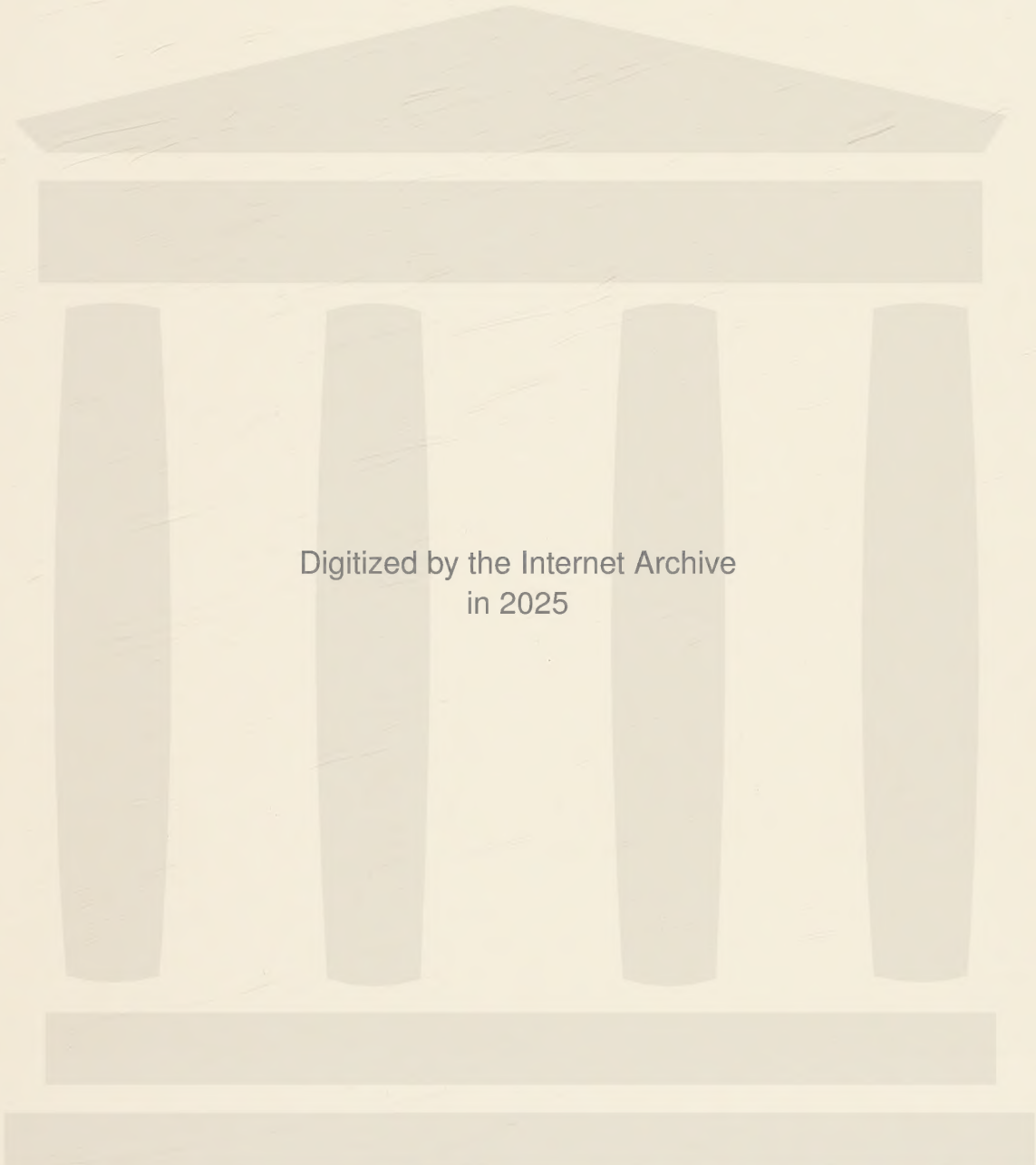

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A Painting from the Fresco in the Crypt at Sebaste (see pp. 36, 37 and Plate 16*c*)
In the right foreground is part of the hill, with flowers on it, and the arm of one of the two diggers

Frontispiece] [*Painted by Muriel Bentwich*

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It is a pleasant duty to return thanks to all those who contributed to the success of the two investigations which are described in the following pages. M. Seyrig, Director of the Service of Antiquities in Beyrouth, arranged all the preliminaries of our work at Bosra and showed the kindest interest in its conduct. M. le Lieut. Leneveu of the Services Spéciaux at Dir'aa, and other French Officers there and at Bosra, forwarded our researches in the most friendly and hospitable way. Mr. Colt joined our first expedition with two members of his Esbeita staff and made a material contribution to our funds. On our second Bosra expedition I count it as a piece of great good fortune to have secured the help of Mr. A. H. Detweiler as architect : the walls of the cathedral where they have not been destroyed are now hedged with modern houses, the interior is filled with heaps of refuse, and it is an extremely difficult building to plan or photograph : the drawings and plans which follow will give readers some idea of my debt to their author. To all these friends and helpers I tender my warmest thanks.

The work at Sebaste was an episode in that of the Joint Expedition which conducted excavations there in 1931–3 under the auspices of Harvard University, the Palestine Exploration Fund, the Hebrew University and the British School of Archæology in Jerusalem, and I am especially indebted to two members of the staff of the expedition. The plans and drawings of the church on this site were made by Mr. J. Pinkerfeld of Tel Aviv, and I have to thank him further for much technical advice and many suggestions. The coloured frontispiece is by another member of the staff, Miss Muriel Bentwich. Most of the photographs were taken by the staff photographers of the Department of Antiquities at Jerusalem, which has kindly authorised us to make use of them in this memoir.

Finally, I have to express our deep gratitude to Sir Robert Mond, the Treasurer of the British School, who has added to his many benefactions to the School by taking upon himself the whole cost of the present publication.

J. W. C.

February, 1937.

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ABBREVIATIONS

B.Z. . .	Byzantinische Zeitschrift.
Butler, P.E. .	Publications of the Princeton University Archæological Expedition to Syria, Div. II, Ancient Architecture in Syria, 1907, 1913.
Butler, E.C.S.	Early churches in Syria, ed. Baldwin Smith, 1929.
C.J. . .	Churches at Jerash, by J. W. Crowfoot, British School of Archæology in Jerusalem, Suppl. Paper 3, 1931.
K.F. . .	Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen, Berlin, 1931, 1933.
P.E.F.Q.S. .	Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund.
P.P.T.S. . .	Palestine Pilgrims' Texts Society publications.

I. THE CATHEDRAL AT BOSRA

1. The City of Bosra

Bosra lies upon the fringe of the desert more than seventy miles south of Damascus. It became the capital of the Roman province of Arabia which was formed by Trajan in A.D. 106 after he had conquered the Nabatæan kingdom of Petra. There is no evidence at present that it was a very ancient city as places go in these parts ; the oldest visible remains are in the style of other Nabatæan buildings of the 1st century. The surroundings are not picturesque : the city lies in a shallow depression in the plain of the Hauran ; Jebel Hauran, the Druse mountain, sprawls away to the north, and when the sky is clear the snows of Hermon show as a tiny glowing line farther to the west ; the near distance is filled with an expanse of black stony fields which turn green for a few weeks in the year if the rains have been good. The wide horizon is the most attractive feature in the landscape now, but the position was in many ways well chosen. Near as it is to the desert, the ground around is very fertile, and the city stood on the chief caravan route which led from Arabia to Damascus and the coast of Phœnicia ; a camel is one of the emblems on the 2nd–3rd century coins, and a visit of the most famous of all cameleers, the Prophet Mohammed, is commemorated by a ruined mosque on the spot where his camel knelt. Wealth poured into it both from trade and agriculture ; the theatre is one of the largest in the Near East, and there are the remains of enormous markets and magazines, of baths, temples, reservoirs, and gates.

Christianity reached Bosra at an early date : there was a bishop with heretical leanings in the 3rd century, and Origen visited the community twice ; there were Christian martyrs, and at least two of the later bishops or archbishops were men of distinction. One bishop, Titus, wrote a polemic against Manes which has been lost, and Archbishop Julianus, who built the cathedral, has other claims also to be remembered. The town fell into Muslim hands through treachery, but it continued to flourish for some centuries longer, and there are several ruinous mosques with tall tower minarets, like black campanili, and a mediæval bath with fine stonework, by the side of earlier classical and Christian buildings. The Crusaders made an abortive attempt to capture the place in the 12th century, but it fell ultimately to a nearer and older foe. The city was

too close to the desert to survive the weakness of later governments, and towards the end of the Middle Ages it seems to have gradually languished away. Local gossip says that the site was absolutely abandoned about 400 years ago and only resettled within the last four or five generations by Arab fellahin from the neighbouring villages. I cannot quote any written authority to confirm this story, but it is quite likely to be true ; Jerash, which is less than 35 miles away and rather less exposed, was deserted even earlier and not reoccupied until after the middle of the last century.

2. Previous Work on the Cathedral

When the first European travellers came this way, the resettlement was recent, and the deep impression which the ruins made upon the Turks is reflected by its Turkish name of Eski Sham or Old Damascus. Latterly, since the place has become a municipality and a railway terminus, the ruins have gone from bad to worse. The early travellers, like many modern archæologists, were little interested in Christian antiquities, and the notes which they made about the cathedral are scanty.[1] Fortunately the cathedral did not suffer seriously before the last quarter of the 19th century, and in the meanwhile two French expeditions had devoted more time to its study, and an American expedition had brought back photographs of the site.[2] Since 1865, the date of the publication of M. de Vogüé's work on Central Syria, Bosra Cathedral has occupied in consequence a large place in the study of Early Church Architecture ; only last year it was described as one of the " unschätzbare Urkunden noch nicht genug ausgewertet." [3]

E. Guillaume Rey, the leader of the first of the two French expeditions, spent a week at Bosra in 1857 and published the first plan of the cathedral a few years later.[4] The scale of the plan is wrong but in other respects this plan is more accurate than the later plans which have been published ; it was reproduced once by Fergusson,[5] but it has been ignored by most later writers. Rey's text is too brief to be of value.

[1] Seetzen, Burckhardt, Richter and Buckingham, are the most instructive. The relevant passages in their travels are quoted by Brünnow and Domaszevski in *Die Provincia Arabia*, 1909, III, pp. 30 ff.

[2] According to " the oldest inhabitant " the upper walls were pulled down for building material by the then government, but the lower walls were laid in such good lime mortar that the government agents found the labour it cost to destroy them too great.

[3] In an article by H. Sedlmayr in B.Z., 35 (1935), p. 48.

[4] Rey, *Voyage dans le Haouran*, 1863, Text, p. 179, Plate IV.

[5] *A History of Architecture*, 1867, II, p. 307.

M. de Vogüé is the real father of the scientific study of the building. He visited Bosra in 1862 and his book *Syrie Centrale* was published three years later. His notes on the building are admirable and, though the plan, for which he disclaimed any pretension to exactitude, is less accurate in some details than Rey's, the fidelity of his drawing of the exterior is confirmed by a photograph [1] which was taken from the same angle by an American expedition in 1875 before the walls had been very seriously damaged (Plate 1*a*, *b*).

Most of the west wall of the cathedral was still standing at that time, and the inscription which recorded the circumstances of the building was in its original position above the central door. It was published with an excellent commentary by M. Waddington [2] who was one of the companions of M. de Vogüé. The cathedral, we learn from this inscription, was dedicated to the glorious martyrs Sergius, Bacchus, and Leontius, when Julianus was archbishop, in the year 407 and in the 6th indiction. The year 407 of the Bosran Era began on the 22nd March 512, and the 6th indiction began on the 1st September of the same year, so the church was finished between September 512 and March 513. SS. Sergius and Bacchus, who are supposed to have been Roman soldiers, were martyred under Galerius, the first at Rusafa, the second at Barbalissus in Commagene ; both are commemorated on the 7th October ; S. Leontius suffered perhaps under Hadrian at Tripolis in Syria—he is commemorated on the 18th June. Archbishop Julianus was a man of distinguished piety and learning who suffered for his orthodoxy. In the very year perhaps when the cathedral was opened, he was expelled from his See, for refusing to receive the synodal letters sent by Severus, a heretic, who was appointed patriarch of Antioch by the Emperor Anastasius. After the death of Anastasius, Julianus returned to Bosra ; some of the citizens tried to poison him, but he made the sign of the cross over the cup and drank it without any harm.[3]

At the time of the Vogüé expedition the four walls round the nave [4] of the cathedral, as I propose to call it, and sections of the clerestory above them were still fairly well preserved, the chancel arch was standing and the roofs over the five chambers at the east end were more or less intact. The roof over the nave

[1] The negative of this photograph is now at Bangor, Maine, U.S.A., and it is by the courtesy of Professor Moulton of Bangor that I am enabled to publish this illustration.

[2] Waddington, *Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie*, 1870, No. 1915. It is republished by Brünnow.

[3] Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, 1740, II, cols. 857, 858. Elia the patriarch of Jerusalem was also driven out of his See by Anastasius in 513 (*op. cit.*, III, col. 182).

[4] I use the term to include all that lies west of the chancel, *i.e.* the nave proper and the ambulatory round it : in English cathedrals the term is used to include the aisles as well as the nave proper in such phrases as a " nave service."

had collapsed long ago, and a late chapel with transverse arches in the local Hauran style stood in front of the old chancel which had evidently continued in use after the nave was abandoned. The ground between this chapel and the nave walls had been turned into a cemetery, but there was not much trace of the graves even when Richter visited the place.[1]

The main features of the plan, the height of the walls and the clerestory, and the shell of the five chambers at the east end, were plain, but it was not clear how the great circle of the nave, which was over 36 m. in diameter, had originally been roofed, as the construction of the late chapel and cemetery had buried or destroyed every vestige of the old roof supports. The problem was important because the cathedral is one of the largest centralised churches [2] in the East and it was more than twenty years older than Santa Sophia. Archæologists would have been more than human if they had not been ready with conjectural reconstructions. M. de Vogüé suggested that it was roofed with a dome 19 m. in diameter carried on eight great piers like the dome which was then standing over the church of S. George at Ezra' (Plate 11*b*), less than 30 miles away. Brünnow, who visited Bosra in 1897, after most of the nave walls had vanished, proposed some modifications in the Vogüé plan, but these and other conjectures were rightly dismissed as resting on nothing but hypotheses.[3]

Something better seemed in sight when H. C. Butler declared that in 1909 he saw the base of a composite pier under the north wall of the late chapel at the bottom of a hole which the people happened to have made in the deep rubbish heaps then covering the middle of the nave.[4] The pier, of which Butler published a measured drawing, appeared to be part of an octagon, but the octagon to which it belonged was much larger than that suggested by Vogüé, and the dome which Butler restored above it was 26 m. in diameter. This reconstruction was criticised by Herzfeld and Creswell on the ground that the piers proposed were much too slender to carry a dome of these dimensions.[5] Herzfeld compared the building with the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem, and suggested that at Bosra also, in order to span the width, there must have been

[1] "*Ihr Boden scheint mit Christen-Gräbern angefüllt,*" is the phrase which he uses, *see* Brünnow, *l.c.*

[2] This seems the most convenient phrase to embrace circular, octagonal and other, churches which are built on a concentric plan : it is used in this sense by Gertrude Bell in *The Thousand and One Churches*, by Talbot Rice in his *Byzantine Art*, and by Dalton in *East Christian Art.*

[3] Holtzinger, *Handluch der Architektur*, 1909, Part II, vol. III, 1, pp. 142–3.

[4] Butler, P.E., p. 281.

[5] Herzfeld in *Jarhb. d. Preuss. Kunstsamml.*, XLII (1921), pp. 119–21. Creswell in *B.S.A.J. Supplementary Paper* 2, 1924, pp. 21 f., and in *Early Muslim Architecture*, 1932, I, pp. 72–4. Their criticisms have been endorsed since by Watzinger, *Denkmäler Palästinas*, 1935, p. 136, but not by Sedlmayr, *l.c.s.*

a second ring of supports, carrying a small timber dome in the middle with two aisles running round it ; Creswell followed Herzfeld in the main but introduced some ingenious modifications which brought the plan even closer to the Jerusalem plan. Both reconstructions were admittedly conjectures. In spite of Butler's pier the real problem was still unsolved.

The discovery in 1929 at Jerash of a church dedicated to S. John the Baptist, which may fairly be described as a little Bosra (Plate 11*c*), turned the writer's attention again to the cathedral ; the Jerash Church was finished in 532, twenty years after the Bosra Church ; it showed that the influence of the latter was still strong locally. This church, however, was much smaller ; the central portion of the roof had been carried on four columns, and it threw no light on the roofing problem at Bosra.[1]

It was in these circumstances that it was decided to make an expedition to Bosra in search of further evidence.

3. The Expeditions of the British School

In its present state the church is a melancholy sight. It stands in a maze of tortuous alleys in a fairly populous quarter at the north end of the town. One hardly knows whether to weep more over what has been taken away or over what has been added. The most obtrusive addition is a large concrete water-tank which the Municipality has perched on the top of the chapel at the south-east corner ; pipes run down from it diagonally across the south side of the nave (Plates 3*a*, 5*a*). The post and telegraph office is lodged in the exedra at the north-west corner (Plate 4*c*), and there are three houses built against what remains of the north wall. The south wall has fared better ; there are houses at both ends, but a large part is still visible, having been saved as the backwall of a courtyard (Plate 3*a*, *b*) ; burrows lead off it into what were once parts of the south-east exedra and an adjoining niche. Inside the nave is a hen-house, a kitchen, and three rough walls dividing the backyards of the surrounding houses, but more than half the area is buried metres deep in rubbish. Every trace of the clerestory and the triple doors in the north and west walls has disappeared, and the only part which is fairly well preserved is at the east end where the former chancel and three of the adjacent rooms are used as stores and kept under lock and key (Plate 4*a*).

Theoretically, of course, the church is an ancient monument and belongs to the State, but some of the squatters have been there for a long time and have acquired rights of a sort, though they have no legal titles. The French authorities

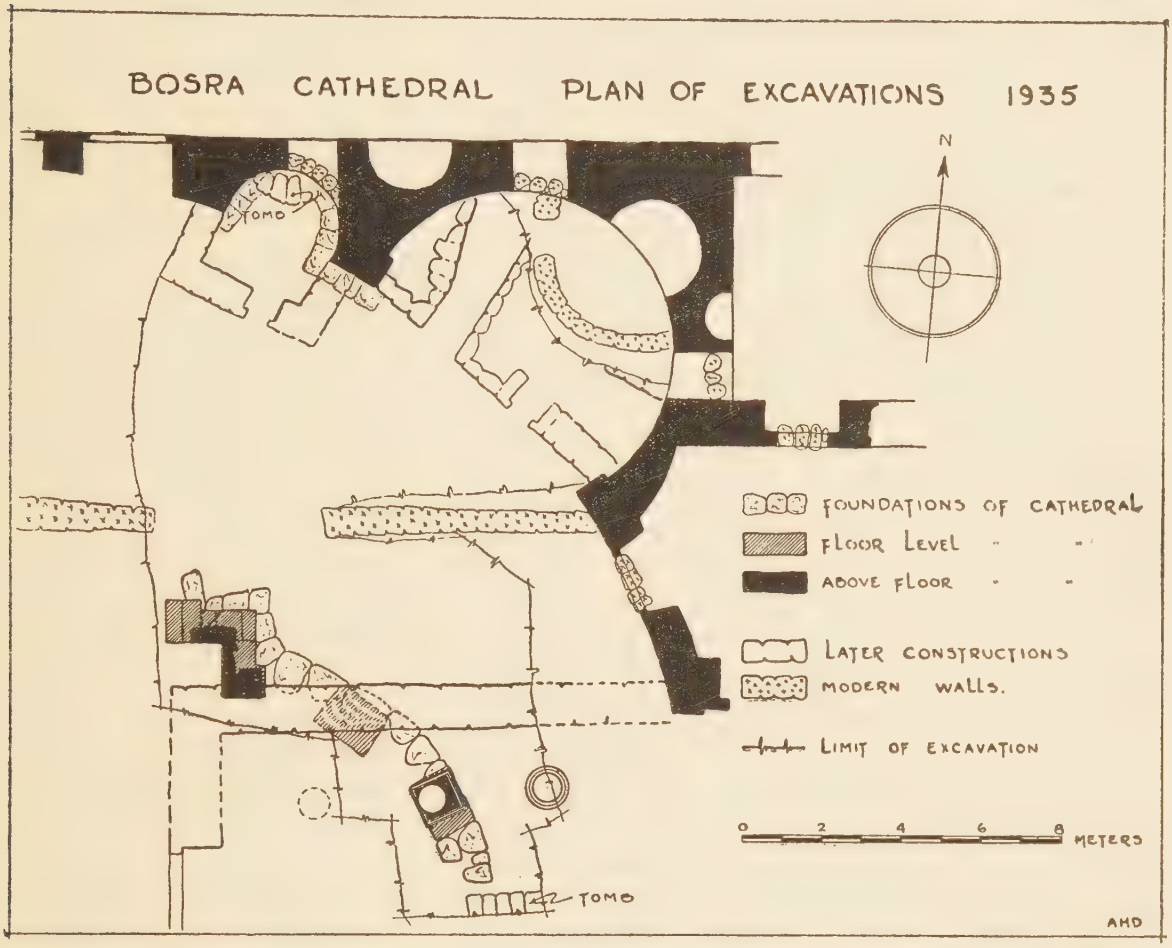
[1] *See Churches at Jerash* (*B.S.A.J. Supplementary Paper* 3), 1930, p. 21.

were most friendly and the compromise which they arranged was eminently reasonable: I was to dig where I liked without paying rent, but I was to rebuild any modern erections I destroyed in the course of the work—in other words, the *status quo* was to be preserved. A proper clearance would have involved wholesale expropriations and the diversion of the Municipal waterworks; all I contemplated was a series of soundings, and for these the facilities offered were sufficient.

Our first expedition started in May 1934. I was accompanied by Mrs. Crowfoot, Mr. Colt, the leader of the expedition to Esbaita, and two of his colleagues, Mr. Way and Mr. Baly. In ten days or so we made five soundings in the nave, three of them in the south-east quadrant (Plate 5*a*) and two at the west end. The soundings were designed to strike four of Butler's piers and the south-east segment of any inner circle which might have existed. The results were disappointing; there was no sign either of Butler's piers or of any inner ring. Three courses of the south wall of the late chapel were still standing under the mounds of rubbish; they were built in mud mortar quite unlike the hard lime mortar that was used in the older walls, and a number of carved stones, as Burckhardt had observed, were inserted in them in a haphazard fashion. The paving of the chapel was intact near the south wall—at the west end it had been disturbed in recent days by some previous investigator. Outside the chapel the graves of the cemetery mentioned by Richter were packed thickly, side by side and one above the other. The only promising discovery was a square moulded base set on two heavy stone blocks with traces of blackish plaster on them (Plate 7*a*, *b*). The bottom of the base was 112 cm. square, the two stones on which it rested 115 cm. long by 55–7 cm. across. The base stood on the level of the cathedral floor which was nearly a metre below that of the chapel, but it was almost under the water pipes and was placed so eccentrically in relation to either of the rings for which we were looking that we could make nothing of it nor follow it farther. It was, however, so obviously in position that it was plainly desirable to fix the spot as accurately as possible, and at my request Dr. Fisher, Mr. Detweiler, and Mr. Murrell, three architects who happened to be working at Jerash on the Yale-American School Expedition, kindly came over to do so with a theodolite. The existence of a broken base with a similar moulding near the line of the west wall—it had been used as a chopping block by a butcher who used to live in the present Post Office—and two pedestal blocks in the foundations of the late chapel deepened the mystery (Plate 7*c*).

In March 1935 I returned with my daughter Diana and Mr. Henry Detweiler. This season we worked in the north-east quadrant. A modern retaining wall

runs through the middle of this area (*see* Plate 5*b* and Fig. 1). The part north of the wall is the backyard of the adjoining house ; a hen-house is built against the exedra at east end, and the ground level is only about a metre above the cathedral floor level ; on the south side of the wall are the main rubbish heaps which rise 3 or 4 m. higher. In the area between the north line of the cathedral,

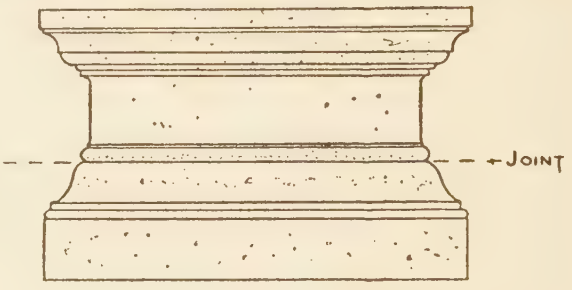


[*A. H. Detweiler*

FIG. 1.—BOSRA : PLAN OF EXCAVATIONS IN 1935

the hen-house, and the retaining wall down the middle, we found some indifferent late walls contemporary perhaps with the chapel, and one grave (*see* Fig. 1 and Plate 4*e*) ; in the debris several architectural fragments, among them two Attic bases, the upper half of a Corinthian capital, and some broken pieces of basalt column shafts, but not a scrap of paving. Under the rubbish heaps south of the retaining wall which we demolished, better fortune awaited

us. The north wall of the late chapel stood three courses high, like the south wall we had seen in the previous year, and at the east end of our trench which was about 9 m. long we expected to see Butler's pier ; the soil had been disturbed by some such hole as he describes, but there was no trace of any pier and it is evident that he made some mistake when he was working up his notes in America.[1] At the other end of the trench, however, near the north-west corner of the chapel three courses of a ⌐-shaped pier came to light. The bottom row of stones was a spreading foundation course ; the middle one which was better laid rose to the level of the cathedral floor ; the top one which contained only four stones rose above it (Plate 6*a–e*, and Fig. 1). Other stones led away from the foundation course in both directions ; on the north side a single stone remained, curving slightly west of north ; on the east side a curving line of stones ran under the chapel wall, and a moulded base like that found in 1934 was built into the north face of the wall above them (visible on Plate 6*b* and *c*.) Inside the chapel the curving foundation continued under the later paving stones nearly up to the middle of the building, and in two places there were other remains above it : (*a*) under one of the chapel columns a complete pedestal was still standing (Plates 6*f*, 7*d*, *e*, and Fig. 2). The pedestal rested on three heavy blocks which were like those I had seen under the moulded base in 1934 and of the same length—114–5 cm.—and the pedestal itself was composed of two stones, a moulded base of the now familiar type, and a cubical die like the two dies seen in 1934 in the foundation of the south wall of the chapel. (*b*) On the inside of the chapel wall another of the heavy blocks on which the moulded bases rested was found, still in its original place, on the curving foundations and measuring again 115 cm. long ; it was obviously one of the blocks from which the base in the north face of the wall above it had been shifted.



[*A. H. Detweiler*

FIG. 2.—PEDESTAL

In the middle of the church the curving foundation was interrupted by a well-built tomb which lay between the two floor levels, and at this point we were obliged to stop work as we had already spent longer than we had intended.

[1] The illustrations in P.E.F.Q.S., January 1936, Plate II, show that the pier cannot have been destroyed in the interval since his visit, because the chapel wall and the paving inside are still intact.

The problem which had taken us to Bosra was solved. The ⌐-shaped pier was evidently the north-east corner of a central square ; the curving foundation was a segment of a semicircle described on the east face of this square ; and the finds (*a*) and (*b*) above were parts of a colonnade on this semicircle. As soon as they were plotted on a plan with the '34 base marked on it, we saw that this base, which had been so puzzling, was in position in a similar semicircular colonnade on the south side of the central square. The foundation stone projecting from the north side of the angle pier was the beginning of a similar colonnade on the north, and the " butcher's block " at the west end is, in all probability, the displaced fragment of a colonnade on the fourth side. Originally, then, there were four semicircular colonnades in the middle of the church arranged in the form of a quatrefoil or tetraconch, with four columns in each colonnade standing on high pedestals. We have actually seen the lower parts of four moulded pedestals, two in position, on the east and south sides respectively ; the upper parts of three, one in position ; five column bases, half one capital, and many drums and fragments of drums from column shafts. All these remains were carved out of the local basalt, and others will doubtless be found if the building is ever completely cleared. Besides these we found several voussoirs about 82 cm. long, from an arch with a span of about 12 m. which must come from one of the arches between the piers in the central square.

Except in the tomb under the floor of the chapel no small finds of any significance were made. This tomb, which must have been made while the chapel was in use, contained two glass vessels which give what is at present the only certain *terminus ante quem* for the foundation of the chapel. The vessels belong to a group of glass which is assigned by Lamm to the period *c.* A.D. 1250–1310 (*see* Plate 10*a*, *b*). The larger of the two vessels is a perfume sprinkler or *omom ;* two gold lines run round the body of the vessel, and the space between these and an ornamented band below the neck is decorated with a semée of gold disks ; the band has an arabesque in gold on a ground of strong blue. The second vessel is a beaker of thick glass with a stout base-ring.[1]

4. The Reconstruction of the Building

The cathedral must have stood, like other great churches of the time, in the middle of a large precinct which certainly enclosed an imposing establishment

[1] *See* Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten aus dem nahen Osten.* Vessels resembling the *omom* are shown on Plate VI, Nos. 20, 21, and Plate CLXII, No. 2 : ones like the beaker on Plate V, No. 17, and Plate CLXIII, CLXIV. Lamm describes the group as a " *spärlich emaillirten kleinfigurigen Damaskus-gruppe.*"

still standing a few metres to the east. This building was identified by Butler as the episcopal palace ; it now shelters two or three families and has suffered since Butler's visit but the west façade survives, and the chief room behind it is built on a trefoil plan which may well have been designed by the cathedral architect. The quarter is now so thickly populated that it is impossible to trace the boundaries of the precinct ; we cannot say, for example, whether it included also the great basilica 60 m. away to the north which is now called the church of the monk Bahira,[1] who is famous as the teacher of the Prophet.

The cathedral itself was isolated in the precinct. It had doors on all four sides, five at the west end, three each on the north and south sides, and two at the east end which led out towards the palace from the rooms on either side of the chancel. There is no sign of any porches or porticoes against the walls, no trace of a narthex at the west end. The absence of a western narthex and a multitude of doors are features also of the churches at Jerash.[2]

Ground Plan. The ground plan and the drawings which are published on Plate 2 (*a*) and (*b*) embody the results of our work. The plan is classical in balance and symmetry, though it was indifferently set out. In the nave the grouped doors in the middle of the three outer walls correspond in width with the opening into the chancel, and the spacing of the columns in the semicircular colonnades corresponds with the varying widths of the doorways. The niches which flank the grouped doors are alike both inside and outside. The two eastern exedræ differ only from those at the west in having a window in place of a door on the long axis of the cathedral and in having the middle niche slightly deflected from the centre. The chambers at the east end correspond in the same way, but they have been even less carefully set out. It seems that the basic unit or module of the plan was given theoretically by the square enclosed by the four central piers. The length of the sides of the square which was rather more than 12 m. is probably to be equated with 40 feet,[3] and the unit appears to have been a quarter of the central area, *i.e.* a square with a side of 20 feet ; the whole building was six units long from north to south, the outer radius of the colonnades equalled the side of one unit, and the opening into the exedræ equalled the diagonal.

[1] The plan of this building which is given by Brünnow is more correct than Butler's : there is no pilaster projecting on the south side at the south-west corner as shown by the latter, who was misled by a shadow on his photograph.

[2] *See* C.J., p. 10, and the references given there.

[3] I have to qualify both these figures : the building in its present state is very difficult to measure exactly—we have only seen one of the four piers, we cannot tell what allowance should be made for plaster or revetments and we do not know the exact length of the Bosran foot in use at that time.

There is an error in the setting out of the nave, the south side being longer than the north, and this error was increased in the total building ; according to Detweiler's plan the south wall is 1·40 m. longer than the north wall. This difference accounts for the curious line of the east wall of the chamber on the south side of the chancel which was set askew in order to abut on the pilaster in the south-east corner room. The masonry of this skew wall is exactly like that of the apse, so there can be little doubt that the error was made at the time of the original construction. In spite of these mistakes the basic unit which we have identified in the nave reappears in two parts of this section of the building ; the width of the chancel, including the side walls, measures two units, and the length of the south-east chamber is likewise two units, or roughly. The gap, however, between theory and practice seems to have been rather wide.

Exterior. The sketch which is reproduced on Plate 1*c* will give some idea of the appearance which, we believe, the cathedral presented from the south-west ; the episcopal palace is shown behind it and the church of Bahira farther away in the distance to the left. The imaginary standpoint is approximately the same as that in the sketch of M. de Vogüé and in the American photograph. The height of the walls and the clerestory, the disposition and dimensions of doors and windows, are based partly on extant remains, partly on the older records ; the shape of the central lantern and the pitch of the roof are conjectural. From the outside the cathedral was severely plain, and the severity was accentuated by the monotonous colour and texture of the stone. The stone is the local basalt ; it was used in rather small blocks of a convenient size to handle, those laid on the outer face of the walls are carefully squared and ground to a smooth, dead surface, and the miscellaneous masons' marks which have been found on them (Vogüé, p. 65) prove that they were taken from some earlier building. The coursing in the parts which have survived is regular ; the niche with fanciful patterning in the north wall, which is published by Vogüé, is no longer visible, and the only work of the kind which I saw is in a niche in the west wall near the Post Office where a bottle-shaped stone has been built into the conch. Carved detail was used most sparingly : a row of stones taken from a classical entablature was laid as a cornice at the east end, and much of it still remains (*see* Butler, P.E., ill. 249, and Plate 4*a*) ; in his sketch Detweiler has suggested that this cornice was continued above the nave walls and round the clerestory. An isolated classical block (Plate 9*c*) is still in place at the north-west corner some 3 m. below the original top of the wall. Apart from these there was no carving on the outside so far as we can tell, and there were no mouldings round doors or windows ; the plain surface of the masonry was only broken by the doors, windows, and niches. At Ezra', too, the only mouldings

are those over the doors at the west end, and the contemporary churches at Jerash are almost as severe; this simplicity is a regular late classical trait.[1]

Interior. Inside the building the height of the columns in the quatrefoil must have been *approximately* as shown in Detweiler's Section (Plate 2*b*). The top of the capitals has been brought level with the top of the two still surviving chancel arch brackets which are rather more than a metre lower than the crown of the exedræ; the height of the order which this gives is 7·60 m., roughly nine times the lower diameter of the columns, a proportion which is likely to be more or less correct for the period (2nd century) to which the columns belong; a little later, of course, fantastically elongated columns 13 diameters in height were botched up in the Kalybe at Bosra (Butler, P.E., p. 255). The architraves and arches above the colonnades are purely conjectural; the form shown is based on the analogy of the outer doors as shown in the older records, and it is like that in the arcades in the Aqsa mosque at Jerusalem and the Umayyid mosque at Damascus.

Clerestory. In all the restorations except that of Herzfeld it is assumed that there was an upper gallery on the level of the clerestory; Herzfeld expresses himself with some diffidence, but we are confident that his instinct was right. The east wall of the nave is still standing high on both sides of the chancel, and we could find no trace of any gallery having abutted on it, nor is there any trace of steps to give access to one. A gallery, if it had existed, would presumably have stood above the crown of the exedræ, which is nearly 9 m. above the floor of the building, and the roof of the gallery could not have been much higher than the top of the clerestory windows, which were only 2 m. above the top of the exedræ; these figures are known (*see* Plate 2*b*), and the proportions of such a gallery, as well as the extraordinary floor-plan which the supporting quatrefoil colonnades would necessitate, are to our mind conclusive proofs that no such gallery existed. The number of windows in the clerestory offers a further argument in the same direction; so far as we can calculate from the Vogüé drawing and the American photograph (Plate 1*a*, *b*) there were more than fifty windows in the circumference of the clerestory—there was in fact more window than wall: the lighting thus provided is ridiculously in excess of what was needed in a gallery some 3 m. high, but wholly intelligible if it poured down directly into the nave, which would have been poorly lit otherwise, because through the thickening of the corners the windows are clustered round the doors. The non-existence of a gallery being thus established, we can now form a better

[1] *See* C.J., p. 37, with the quotation from Choricius, and Watzinger, D.P., p. 148: "die Schmucklosigkeit der Aussenwände ist der antiken Profanbaukunst des ausgehenden 3 Jahrh. eigentümlich."

idea of the interior of the building; the whole of the nave was flooded with light—it did not, like the church of Santa Constanza at Rome, consist of a central space in bright light surrounded by a cavernous ambulatory; the light was diffused equally over the central area and the space beyond; the exedræ had additional lights, and the chancel was lit further by ample windows in the east wall. This is one of the most significant features in the church.

Roof. The roofing of the nave is the matter which has divided archæologists most in the past; was it of the Roman-Byzantine vaulted type, the Baldacchin type as it has been recently called,[1] or of the older Hellenistic type? In this matter the new evidence is decisive. The barrel vaults over the chambers at the east end and the conches over the exedræ were made of volcanic scoriæ, but the walls of the central piers (*see* Fig. 1) were less than a metre thick, lighter that is to say than the walls of the east chambers or the exedræ, and the roof which rested on them must have been of timber. Masonry domes both of stone and scoriæ are common, of course, in Syria—there is a rectangular dome made of scoriæ in the south baths of Bosra—but they are comparatively small and rest on very solid substructures. Herzfeld (*l.c.*, p. 121) is probably right in assuming that the original dome at Ezra' was made of timber like the earlier dome over the Anastasis at Jerusalem,[2] the *new* church of Justinian at Jerusalem which is described by Procopius, and the later Dome of the Rock, and M. de Vogüé saw actual holes for wooden beams in the wall of the clerestory which was standing in his day. The combination of a timber roof over the nave with conches of scoriæ over the exedræ is exactly what we found reason to assume at Jerash; in the debris under the exedræ there were masses of scoriæ, in the centre of the church not a scrap.[3]

There is no evidence, of course, to show the shape of the lantern or dome or whatever it was over the centre; the mosaics in the mosque at Damascus offer a bewildering variety of roof forms to choose from. Detweiler has chosen a simple form of octagonal lantern as being at least in keeping with the simple lines of other parts of the building.

Paving. The floor we believe to have been paved with slabs of marble and stone. If it had been paved with mosaics we could hardly have failed to find some remnant left against the north wall. As it was, the only stones found on the floor level were the heavy basalt blocks which lay immediately under the pedestals of the columns, but where these projected beyond the pedestals traces of blackish plaster, which I take to be part of the bedding of the pavement, were

[1] *See* two illuminating articles by Sedlmayr in K.F., II (1933), and B.Z., 35 (1935).
[2] *See* Watzinger, D.P., p. 131.
[3] C.J., p. 22.

seen both on the blocks and a few centimetres up the side of the pedestal. Furthermore, in the lowest stratum of debris several fragments of broken floor-tiles of a hard yellowish limestone with red marbling, like the Palestinian *mizzi yahudi*, came to light. The tiles would have measured about 25 cm. square and might well have been part of a patterned floor such as that in S. Theodore's at Jerash. At Jerash, indeed, it seems to have been the rule to lay such floors in the finest and largest churches ; we imagine that they were more costly than mosaics, and if marble were used at Bosra, it would account for the complete absence of paving wherever we dug, because marble is one of the first things looted.

Wall Decoration. The stones inside the building are not smoothly dressed like those outside, and the walls no doubt were for the most part heavily plastered and painted (*see* Plates 4*d*, *e* ; 5*a*, *b*) ; in places they may have been revetted with marble or limestone, but there are no plug-holes now visible. The older travellers (Seetzen, Buckingham, Porter, and Vogüé) saw several fragments of fresco, including a Virgin with outstretched hands at the end of the apse (Vogüé, p. 66), but the only considerable piece we saw is in a very dark place on the south wall of the chancel. We could not make much out of it on the spot, but the illustration (Plate 9*a*, *b*),[1] which is from a photograph taken by flashlight, enables us, I think, to identify the subject. In the foreground is a table, with two plates on it and some other objects ; in front the table had a border, with a nebulé or wavy pattern, and a trellis below which may represent the frame of the table or a patterned frontal. The table stood in an architectural setting ; parts of two or three columns with plain flat capitals and an architrave are clear ; so is a haloed figure between two of the columns and, less certainly, a bearded figure to the right ; above the architrave are fragments of decoration and more of the framework of the building or tent in which the scene is laid. The painting represents almost certainly the entertainment of the angels by Abraham, a subject which is represented in the chancel of S. Vitale at Ravenna and in the cathedral of Monreale near Palermo ;[2] in the latter, as apparently here, Abraham is on the right of the picture. As may be seen from our illustration the painting runs over the blocking of a window, and cannot therefore be very early ; it belongs probably to the period when the late chapel was in use.

We found no glass tesseræ in our soundings, but it would be reasonable to suppose that the upper part of the walls and the soffits of the arches were decorated with glass mosaics, the more so now that we have learnt that the

[1] The walls on either side of the painting are two of the modern walls on which the low modern stone roof is carried, and one of the stone beams is visible at the top of the picture.

[2] *See* Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archæology*, p. 413. A representation of the same subject in a Cypriote church is published in the *Illustrated London News* for 6th February 1937, p. 213.

mosaics in the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem and in the Umayyid mosque at Damascus were the work not of Byzantine craftsmen but of Syrians.[1]

Carved Detail. As in the churches at Jerash, the carved detail was taken from earlier buildings of the classical period, and Vogüé is in error when he describes the style of the carved stones as differing little from the style of the Late Roman Empire ; there is no difference at all ; all the stones came from some work of the Antonine period, which was probably appropriated *en bloc* for the new edifice.

In the chancel two blocks from a classical entablature which were used as brackets under the chancel arches are still in position (Plate 9*d*, *e*). The archivolt above the entrance to the chancel, which was composed of similar blocks (Vogüé, p. 66, Fig. 22), was standing in the last century ; it has since collapsed and the stones have been re-used in an arch over the low storeroom which has been constructed between the chancel walls. In the central quatrefoil more ancient detail was employed. The pedestals under the columns were made up of two blocks, the join coming between the cyma of the base moulding and the torus below the die (Fig. 2 and Plate 7*d*, *e*). The bases were of good Attic type and stood on octagonal plinths 1·025 m. wide and 0·34 m. high (Plate 8*b*). The capitals like the pedestals were in two halves ; the only fragment found, 0·43 m. high, is of careful Antonine work, the calathus strongly marked, the modelling of the volutes plastic, and the abacus enriched with two mouldings, an ovolo and a row of flutings which end in an S (Plate 8*a*). A series of blocks from a frieze about 0·49 m. high which had been built into the late chapel were of two main types, running acanthus rinceaux, and end-blocks with a single spread acanthus between two half leaves (Plate 8*c–f*) ; the treatment of the rosettes on Plate 8*d*, *f* is like the rosette between the middle volutes on the capital, and the common origin of both is obvious. This series of stones were probably re-used on the angle piers, as Detweiler suggests in Plate 2*b* ; some of them have bevelled ends as if to fit together at the corner of such a structure, others have rows of notches to lock them apparently into the stones above. In his account of the masonry at Ezra', Butler notes that on the level of the crown of the arches there are " two courses of finely dressed stone blocks with notches cut in the surface of the lower course and tongues cut upon the lower surface of the course above, so that the two are locked together as if the work were so much carpentry," [2] and the notches at Bosra, though smaller, may have served the same purpose. There is a stone still in place high up in the wall south of the north-east exedra, which has similar notches. In the Hauran stone was so widely used for making roofs, doors,

[1] *See* Marguerite van Berchem in Creswell, E.M.A., I, pp. 154 f.

[2] *See* Butler, E.C.S., pp. 121, 122, and Vogüé, p. 62.

and windows, where wood would have been used in other places, that this carpentry technique seems a natural development. The stone on Plate 9*e* from the crowning member of a cornice was found in the same debris ; it measures 0·405 m. high and is a fellow to the stone still standing at the north-west corner. The crude zigzags carved on the north face of the last mentioned stone (Plate 9*c*) may be paralleled from stones found in more than one church at Jerash, and the zigzag is a favourite motive in the Nejeb churches at Esbaita and elsewhere which were built about the same time ; it is conceivable that they were added by the mason who laid this stone.

The East Chambers. Of the five chambers at the east end the central one, of course, was the chancel or sanctuary. The apse in which it ended was polygonal outside, the five walls forming, as Butler wrote, three sides of a decagon and two half sides. The walls are practically intact, though the roof, as we have already mentioned, has collapsed ; the difference between the measurements of the width given by Butler (9·70 m.) and Vogüé (9·20 m.) is due to the fact that the former measured high up from inside the core of the side-walls which was exposed when the roof fell, while the latter took his measurements between the true faces of the walls. The original floor has been completely destroyed and it is impossible consequently to see any trace of altar, *synthronus*, or chancel rails. On the analogy of contemporary churches at Jerash, the *synthronus* may be placed against the wall of the apse, the altar on the chord, the solea in the rectangular space west of the altar, the chancel rails between the solea and the circle of the nave. The chancel was lit by three large windows at the east end ; lines of plaster on the window jambs show where the frames of the windows ran, and a series of holes may have carried a metal grille in front of the frames. The painting on the south wall has been already mentioned.

The rooms on either side next the chancel, it is obvious, were primarily passage rooms ; they have doors in all four walls, and it was through the east doors that those coming from the episcopal palace would have entered the church ; in the room on the north side the lintel over the door opening into the corner room has a cross upon it. The roofs are still more or less intact—barrel vaults built of rubble and volcanic scoriæ with bands of tiles running through them on the long axis of the room ; outside above the roof of the north room there is a line of well cut corbels which we could not understand. At the east end there were four, if not five windows, three in a row above the door which is now buried up to the lintel, and one, or perhaps two, above the middle window.

The south-east corner room ends in an apse with a niche on either side of it, both plastered in white. The arch in front of the apse which is still intact springs from plain chamfered capitals on pilasters which projected on both sides

of the wall. A little only of the original conch over the apse remains, and the upper courses of the walls under the water-tank are modern, but the walls on which these courses rest are as well built as any of the walls in the rest of the church ; otherwise they would not have had to carry their new burden. The room was lit by three windows in the south wall and had other windows opening into the nave and the south passage room. Several coats of plaster were visible in patches on the walls with a herringbone keying below.

The lower part of the north-east room is inaccessible ; it is said to be blocked with debris. The upper part and fragments of the north outer wall are visible in the house of one of the notables. The north wall of this room was built in the same style as the south wall of the other room, and in the reception room of the notable one can see the upper part of one pilaster, the line of the apse, and the top of a window on the south wall. This room appears, therefore, to have been exactly like that at the other corner.

Butler thought that both the corner rooms were later additions because the stones in the east walls and in the short inner walls are not well dressed (*see* Plate 4*a*), but the outer face of the south wall which is comparatively well preserved (Plate 3*a*, *b*) shows no trace of a break in the masonry or a straight joint between the nave and the corner room, and we must look for another explanation of the different masonry in the other walls. This masonry is like that on the inner face of all the cathedral walls (*see* Plates 4*d*, 5*a*, *b*), and the difference is probably due to a shortage in the dressed stones available from the building which was pulled down to supply the material for the church ; it was hidden, no doubt, under a thick coat of plaster. It may be noted also that the doors leading into these rooms from the passage rooms are not outer doors as Butler represents and as they would have been if his theory was right.

It is more difficult to say how these rooms were used. The plan at the east end suggests that they were chapels with altars in them, but chapels of this character are rare in the East, though there are four of them in the church of the Theotokos on Mt. Garizim.[1] It seems more probable that they were merely sacristies, offices, vestries, or treasuries ; one of them might have been used as a diaconicon, but it is difficult to identify the other with a prothesis chapel because neither of the two opens directly into the nave, and the modern type of prothesis chapel only came into regular vogue later when the Great and Little Entrances were introduced into the liturgy in the time of Justin II.

[1] This church was partially cleared by Schneider in 1928. A plan of it will be found in Watzinger, *Denkmäler Palästinas*, Fig. 46, and also in the *Atti del III congresso internaz. di arch. crist.*, 1934, p. 501.

5. Some Conclusions

The cathedral at Bosra was not, "at the time of its erection, one of the largest domed churches in the world" (Butler). It is highly improbable in fact that it had a dome of any kind. But it is not the less significant, and this for two reasons. In the first place, it was a large congregational church built on a centralised plan in one of the wealthier cities of Syria, the largest church actually which that city possessed. Secondly, in this part of the East, there is no other large centralised church of the period about which we happen to know so much.

The first of these reasons may come as a mild shock to those who have read again and again that the centralised plan is as characteristic of the East as the long basilical plan is of the West.[1] But the truth is that in early days there was little difference between East and West in the matter of church planning; nine-tenths of the larger churches in Greece or Syria before the time of Justinian were of the ordinary long three-aisled basilical plan, as a glance at the many plans collected by Sotiriu [2] and Butler will prove. Memorial churches (martyria) and baptisteries were often built upon a centralised plan in both areas, but for congregational purposes the basilica was the favourite; as a centralised congregational church the cathedral is significant.[3]

In the second place, comparatively little is left of the other centralised churches in Palestine and Syria. Large segments of the original wall round the Anastasis at Jerusalem have survived, but we know little else about the early plan, and much less about the churches of the Ascension and the Virgin's tomb. Constantine's octagonal church at Antioch is known only from meagre literary notices. At Tell Hum and Beisan plans of round buildings have been recovered, but ground plans only. Viranshehr has not been properly investigated, the churches at Garizim and Apamæa (see p. 20) are still unpublished, and the weightiest questions in respect of the crossing at Kala'at Siman are still under debate. We are obviously better informed about Bosra than about any of these churches; we do at least know something about the walls as well as the ground plan, although here too there are many lacunæ in our knowledge.

[1] *See*, for example, Wulff, *Altchristliche und byzantinische Kunst*, I (1913), p. 244.

[2] *Αἱ χριστιανικαὶ Θῆβαι τῆς Θεσσαλίας καὶ αἱ παλαιοχριστιανικαὶ βασιλικαί τῆς Ἑλλάδος*, Athens, 1931.

[3] Dehio and v. Bezold write (*Die kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlandes*, 1892, I, p. 20): "Von den jetzt als Kirchen verwendeten früh-christlichen Zentralbauten (soweit sie nicht unter byzantinischen Einflusse entstanden sind) lässt sich denn auch in keinen einzigen Falle die ursprüngliche Bestimmung zur Gemeindekirche unzweifelhaft nachweisen."

For both the reasons which have been advanced the cathedral deserves all and more than all the attention it has hitherto received.

The features which invite comparison with other remains of ancient architecture are the plan of the walls round the nave, the quatrefoiled colonnades in the middle, the position of the chancel, the lighting provided by the clerestory, and the style of the stone work.

The plan of the walls round the nave, the circle inscribed in a square with exedræ in the corners and niches on either side of grouped doors, goes back to the architecture of the late Hellenistic, or early Imperial, period at least. Rooms which were square externally, and round or octagonal inside, with exedræ in the corners have been found not infrequently, especially in baths, and though some of the evidence comes from old plans which cannot now be controlled there is no reason to call this particular fact in question. There is an early domed example of the plan under discussion in the forum baths at Pompeii [1] ; another in a plan of the so-called Tempio di Siepe which stood in the Campus Martius at Rome [2] ; others occur in plans of the baths of Trajan and Caracalla [3] and in the south baths at Bosra itself [4] (Plate 11*d*). The cathedral is, I believe, the first dated church in which the plan appears : it recurs without niches at Ezra' (Plate 11*b*), and with a reduced number of niches at Jerash (Plate 11*c*) ; at Constantinople in the church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus, and in the baptistery of Santa Sophia. It is a secular plan which was taken up for a short time by church builders, characteristically elaborated with niches in Syria, and then generally dropped. In most of these buildings the room in question is flanked by others [5] and the convenience of a plan with square outer walls is obvious ; at Bosra a similar consideration, the need to add five rooms to the east side of the nave, may have been a determining reason—in another Syrian church, that of Mir'ayeh, where the round nave was not enclosed in a square, the projection of the rooms on either side of the chancel makes a very awkward angle.[6] In other of these buildings there was a dome, and before the general introduction of the pendentive this plan offered perhaps the easiest method of making the transition from the square to the circle.

Prototypes of the colonnaded quatrefoil also occur in classical buildings. The curiously elaborated quatrefoil with sinuous lines in the Piazza d'Oro at

[1] Dehio, p. 23, Plate I, 1, and our Plate 11*a*.

[2] Rivoira, *Roman Architecture*, Engl. ed., 1925, p. 134, Fig. 153.

[3] Anderson, Spiers, Ashby, *The Architecture of Ancient Rome*, 1927, Figs. 30 and 27.

[4] Butler, P.E., p. 261.

[5] The Jerash Church was flanked by parecclesia : so, too, originally was the Church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus, *see* Van Millingen, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople*, 1912, p. 63.

[6] Butler, P.E., p. 70.

Tivoli [1] is a sophisticated example, and there *may* have been one in a contemporary building at Jerusalem, the Tetranymphon which Hadrian is said to have erected over the pool of Siloam.[2] A 4th century quatrefoiled building in Hadrian's stoa at Athens has been identified by some as a church [3] (Plate 11*e*), and a martyrium of the 6th century outside the walls of Corycus in Cilicia was also apparently of this type.[4] Two much greater buildings with colonnaded quatrefoils of approximately the same period are the church of San Lorenzo at Milan (Plate 11*f*)[5] and a large church which has been recently uncovered at Apamæa by the Belgian expedition under M. Mayence.[6] In another Syrian church at Fa'lul of A.D. 526 it has been supposed that there was a similar arrangement,[7] and the motive became popular later in Armenia (Plate 11*g*) and elsewhere, travelling as far afield perhaps as Cologne.[8]

Both motives therefore have a respectable pedigree ; the Bosran architect tried to show his originality, not very happily, by combining them. In all the greater quatrefoiled buildings which have been mentioned in the last paragraph, with the exception of those in Armenia, there are bays in the outer walls corresponding with the semicircles of the quatrefoil, and the effect is much happier ; in Bosra, as in Armenia, the quatrefoil and the circle neutralise each other. A far finer development of the quatrefoil motive is to be seen in the martyrium at Rusafa and the church of Mary at Diyarbekr-Amida,[9] both alas undated, and it may be significant that not one of the reconstructions of Bosra which have been put forward was based on the quatrefoil.

The position of the chancel in an opening on the east side of the ambulatory

[1] *See* plan in Robertson's *Greek and Roman Architecture*, 1929, Fig. 134.

[2] *See* Weigand in B.Z., 23 (1914–9), p. 179, and Vincent and Abel, *Jérusalem*, II, pp. 10, 11 : for a different view, Watzinger, D.P., p. 84.

[3] *See* Sisson in *Papers of the British School at Rome*, XI (1929), p. 66, and Sotiriu, *op. cit.*, p. 174 : against this Weigand in B.Z., 33 (1933), p. 150.

[4] Herzfeld and Guyer in *Mon. Asiæ Min. Antiqua*, II, 1930, pp. 126–50.

[5] The Christian origin of the quatrefoil in this much reconstructed church is now certain according to Delbrueck (J.A.I., 28, 1913, Anzeiger, p. 132).

[6] I am most grateful to M. Mayence for allowing me to see the unpublished plan of this church and for allowing me to refer to it here, and to M. Seyrig for having directed my attention to the discovery. It is mentioned in the *Bulletin des Musées Royaux d'art et d'histoire*, January–February 1936, p. 7.

[7] *See* a note by Baldwin Smith in Butler, E.C.S., p. 166 : this church, however, which has not been excavated, seems to me too small for this plan : I expect the roof supports were like those at Jerash.

[8] Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*, 1918, I, pp. 108 f., and II, pp. 486, 774, etc.

[9] For the former *see* Spanner and Guyer, *Rusafa*, 1926, pp. 56 f., and for the latter the plan by Miss Gertrude Bell in Strzygowski's *Amida*, 1910, p. 192.

links the cathedral at Bosra with the church of the Theotokos at Garizim and the two centralised churches at Jerash and Ezra'. In the group of quatrefoiled buildings which we have just mentioned the procedure was not uniform : at Athens, Corycus, and Apamæa, and in all the Armenian churches, the chancel occupies the east lobe of the quatrefoil, and the open colonnade on this side is replaced by a solid wall which in effect sacrifices nearly a third of the ambulatory so far as the congregation is concerned : in San Lorenzo, as at Bosra, there were open colonnades in all four lobes, but we do not know where the chancel was originally placed. The arrangement at Bosra was criticised a few years ago by Andreades who argued that the chancel which contains the altar is of supreme significance in Christian worship, and that it should therefore occupy the place on which the strongest architectural accent falls, instead of being buried in an annex to the ambulatory and, as we now know, divided from the accented centre of the building by a colonnade.[1] The argument is a serious one : it was some such consideration evidently which dictated the disposition which was adopted at Apamæa and in Armenia. If the middle of the nave at Bosra was empty, as it is shown on our section (Plate 2*b*), we should admit the justice of the criticism, but can we believe that it was empty ? It *might* obviously have been occupied by a shrine with relics of the saints to whom the church was dedicated ; this would have brought the cathedral into line with the ordinary centralised memorial building, but it is not supported by any evidence at present. It seems more likely that it was occupied by the ambo or pulpit which was used both for reading and preaching. In the Jerash churches the ambo is placed close against the chancel screen on the south, or Epistle, side of the central chancel door, but at Santa Sophia it was in the middle of the church, and the site of the Holy Sepulchre in the church of the Anastasis at Jerusalem is actually described by Photius as the place of the ambo (ἄμβωνος τόπον).[2] The centre of the church was recognised therefore as a proper place for an ambo, and we suggest that this is how the centre was filled at Bosra ; there are manifestly good practical reasons for placing a preacher in the middle of his hearers.

In this respect, therefore, Andreades' case is not so strong as it looked, and the abundant light which poured from the clerestory and the other windows with which the cathedral was provided deprives another criticism advanced by the same writer of much of its force ; the cathedral was not, so far as we can

[1] K.F., I (1931), p. 87.

[2] *See* the passage quoted by Abel in Vincent and Abel's *Jérusalem*, II, p. 236. In the Anastasis the ambo was in consequence on the south side of the chancel rail, as at Jerash : *see* the quotation from Eutychius in the same book, p. 244.

tell, divided as he thought into two unequally lit portions like the church of S. Constanza, and the altar, though far from the centre, was not buried in a dark recess opening from an even darker circular tunnel.

The many-windowed clerestory is to our mind one of the most striking features in the church. It may have been a common characteristic of the larger Hellenistic tholoi. It is, after all, only the transfer to a circular plan of the regular lighting system which was adopted in many long basilicas, and there are buildings represented on the frescoes from Bosco Reale which seem to have been similarly lit,[1] but so little of the upper structure of most ancient buildings has survived long enough to be recorded that the evidence given by the earlier records of Bosra is of peculiar value.

When we pass to the stone-work we pass, of course, to a feature which is more purely local. It does not compare very well with the exquisitely finished workmanship in some of the buildings of the 2nd and 3rd centuries at Bosra, the boxes that have been recently uncovered in the theatre, for example, and it is not quite so good as the best work in the mosque of El Mubrak (the place where Mohammed's camel knelt), but it is better than that in contemporary buildings at Jerash and Ezra', or that in the masonry at Hammām as-Sarakh.[2] The voussoirs or archstones do not usually, as is often the case in Syria and Palestine, project beyond the extrados or upper line of the arch,[3] and the horizontal courses of the masonry are fairly regular. Years ago M. de Vogüé suggested that in the fancy stone jointing we might see an anticipation of later Arab work, but we cannot point to any intimations of the relief work which is familiar on the Arab buildings at Amman and Mshatta. There was a fine tradition of stone cutting in Syria which survives to this day; the masonry of the cathedral is neither better nor worse than we should expect to find in such a wealthy city when times were still prosperous.

The new discoveries which have been made at Apamæa and Jerash show that the plan of the cathedral at Bosra is no longer to be regarded as a rare and exceptional phenomenon; it belongs to a type which was not uncommon in Syria and Palestine. There is nothing specifically Roman or Byzantine in the style, and nothing which can be related with the older Orient; the style is clearly derived from classical architecture as it was practised during the later Empire in the great cities of the Hellenistic East. This style has been

[1] *See* those published by Marguerite van Berchem, in Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, I, Figs. 305, 306, from Bosco Reale, and the actual clerestory lights in the mosque at Damascus, *ib.*, Plates 38, 41.

[2] *See* Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, I, Plate 52: the date of this building according to Creswell is about A.D. 725.

[3] For an exception *see* the arch over the niche in Plate 4*c*.

condemned as an *architecture de remploi*, but there is more than one *architecture de remploi ;* at Bosra in the cathedral, as in some of the Jerash churches and in the Dome of the Rock, old architectural detail is re-used in an appropriate way to serve the same functions for which it was originally designed ; it is only in the later Bosra chapel, as in the chapel of S. Helena at Jerusalem, that it is misused. When the cathedral was built, the old classical tradition was still alive—there was, in fact, still a great future before it. Bosra Cathedral is a finger pointing to the mosques which are the glory of Damascus and Jerusalem. With the revolutionary finds which have been made at Bethlehem before our eyes we are chary of generalising with more particularity in anticipation of results which future investigations will bring to light.

II. A GREEK CHURCH AND MONASTERY OF S. JOHN THE BAPTIST AT SEBASTE

1. The Cult of S. John the Baptist at Sebaste

The cult of S. John the Baptist spread in an extraordinary fashion throughout Palestine and Syria. In a number of the great cities, Damascus, Aleppo, Gaza, Baalbek, Beyrouth, Homs, Tripoli, and Jebeil, the principal mosque or church is connected with S. John or his father Zakariah.[1] In Sebaste his name is still feared, and when Muslims mention it they add the orthodox salutation, "Peace be on him." There are late stories which even place the scene of his death and burial in Sebaste,[2] and two churches were built in his honour at opposite ends of the site.

One of these is well known: it stands at the east end of the village above the supposed tomb or prison of the Baptist, for accounts differ. The tomb is a rock-cut Roman burial place with several loculi at the bottom of a long flight of steps. It may be the place which was wrecked by the pagans in a riot which broke out in the time of Julian the Apostate (361–3),[3] and visited a few years later by Jerome's friend, the holy Paula, who gives a marvellous account of the strange sights she saw there,[4] but all trace of Early Christian or Byzantine building on the site was swept away by the Latins who built a magnificent cathedral over it in the Burgundian style during the latter half of the 12th

[1] *See* Max van Berchem, *Voyage en Syrie*, Cairo, 1915, II, p. 11; and Diez, *Churasanische Baudenkmaeler*, Berlin, 1918, p. 95.

[2] *See* a *Life* which was probably written at Emesa in the 5th century (*Patr. Orient.* IV, pp. 521–41), an Armenian calendar in *Patr. Orient.* XVIII, pp. 205–8, and the accounts quoted below from Joannes Phocas and Evliya Tshelebi.

[3] *See* the references in Cabrol-Leclercq's *Dictionnaire, s.v. Jean-Baptiste*, vol. 7, col. 2167.

[4] See *The Pilgrimage of the Holy Paula* in P.P.T.S., 1887, p. 13. "There [at Sebaste] lie Helisæus and Abdias the prophets and he, than whom there was not a greater among those born of women, John the Baptist. Here she trembled at many wonders; for she beheld demons roaring with various torments, and, before the sepulchres of the saints, men who howled like wolves, barked with the voices of dogs, roared with those of lions, hissed like serpents, bellowed like bulls, while others turned round their heads and touched the ground behind their backs with the crown of their heads, and women hung by their feet with their clothes flowing over their faces. She pitied them all; and having shed tears for each, begged the mercy of Christ (for them). Weak as she was, she on foot ascended the mountain, in which, in two caves, during the time of persecution and famine, Abdias the prophet fed a hundred prophets with bread and water."

century.[1] The cathedral was turned into a mosque by Saladin shortly after it was finished, and a mosque it has remained ever since.[2]

The shell only of the cathedral is now left, and a new mosque was built in the chancel during Abd el Hamid's reign. The tomb is still shown, and villagers say that up to the outbreak of the Great War it was regularly visited by streams of Russian pilgrims who made lamentation over it.

The second church, which is the subject of this note, stands at the opposite end of the hill of Samaria on the south side of the summit. This church has had a very different history : there are remains of building which may go back to the 6th century or even earlier, and it continued in use as a church for two or three hundred years after the time of Saladin ; then it was deserted, the walls were buried and its very existence forgotten. Paula is said to have climbed the mountain in order to visit the caves in which Obadiah fed a hundred prophets, and it is possible that some of the cisterns in the monastery near the church were pointed out as the caves in question, but there are many other cisterns on the hill which might equally have been pointed out by her guide. The first certain reference to the site is contained in the account of Joannes Phocas, a Cretan pilgrim who visited the Holy Land in 1185. After mentioning the Latin cathedral at the east end of the town Phocas writes :—

> " In the midst of the upper part of the city stands a hill, upon which in ancient times stood Herod's palace, where the feast took place, and where that wicked damsel danced and received the sacred head of the Baptist as the reward of her dancing. At the present day the place has become a Greek monastery. The church of the monastery is domed and on the left of the altar is a little chapel (κελλίον) in the middle of which is a marble circle lying over a very deep excavation where the first invention of the precious head of the Forerunner, revered by angels, took place, the head having been buried in that place by Herodias." [3]

[1] *See* Vogüé, *Les églises de la Terre Sainte*, p. 361, and Enlart, *Les monuments des Croisés*, II, p. 347.

[2] An interesting reference to this building in the 17th century occurs in the travels of Evliya Tshelebi (1611/2–79). It is translated as follows by Mr. Stephan (*Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, VI, 1936, p. 91) : " Even now the blood of Yaḥya still stains a white stone in the ' House of Ḥaẓret-i Yaḥya ' (which I visited) in Sabasṭya, in the northern part of the said monastery, where Ḥaẓret-i Yaḥya was put to death. Once a year, on the Feast of el-Khiẓr, that blood would overflow, submerge those cells and rooms, ṣoiling and covering them. Witness was borne to this fact by some people of the town and by some saintly sheikhs. I myself have seen some blood poured on a hard rock. It was ruby-coloured," etc.

[3] Migne, P.G., vol. 133, col. 940, and P.P.T.S., *The Pilgrimage of Joannes Phocas*, 1889, p. 16.

Two other pilgrims have left notes on the monastery, Burchard the Dominican, who came here about 1282, and John Poloner, who visited it about 1420. The former writes : " The other church stands on the brow of the hill where the king's palace once stood. Therein dwell Greek monks, Christians, who received me kindly and gave me food. In that church these same Greeks show the place where they say that John was imprisoned and beheaded by Herod." Their story, he goes on to say, is a vain thing because the better authorities (including Josephus) state that John was beheaded at Machærus across the Jordan, and the Herod who beheaded John had no jurisdiction in Samaria,[1] which is true.

John Poloner copied Burchard, and his evidence is of value only because it shows that the monastery was still in existence in the 15th century.[2]

It was on this monastery that we stumbled more or less by chance in 1931 during the first season of the Joint Expedition's work at Samaria.

2. The Discovery of the Church and Monastery

The Harvard Expedition in 1908–10 found a short stretch of massive Israelite walling on the brow of the cliff which overlooks the Roman columned street on the south side of the hill. The field between this wall and the remains of the temple of Herod on the summit was called in their publication the *Lower Terrace*, and it was in search for the continuation of the wall on an extension of this terrace to the east that we came upon the remains of the Greek monastery. The terrace runs all along the south side of the ridge, and the fields into which it is divided are known as *The Lands of the Monastery* (*Aqtān el Deir*), though the name seemed to have no particular associations for the present owners when we started work, and the traces of monastic buildings we uncovered in our first trench had long been buried.

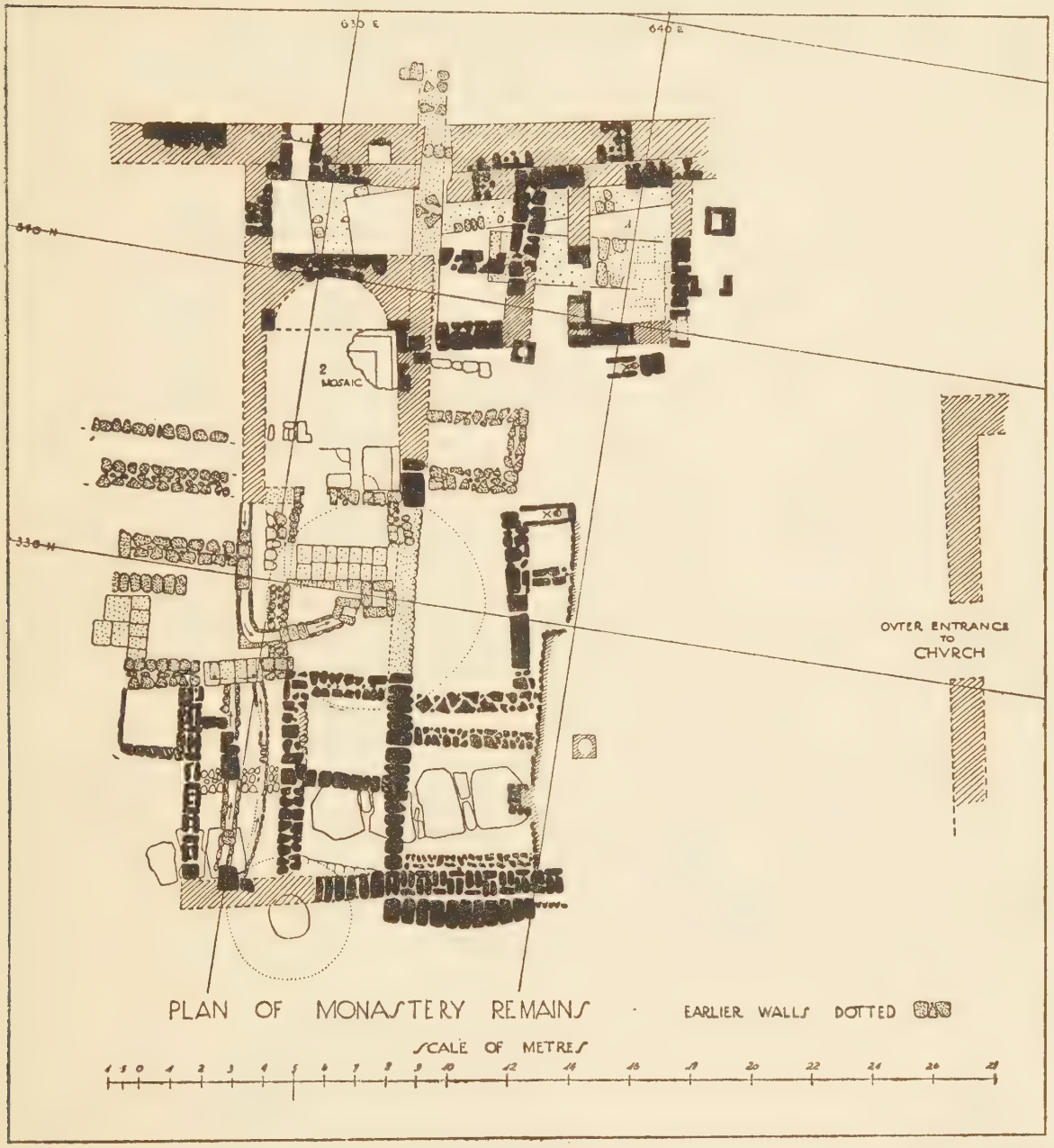
The ground was under cultivation when we leased it, but close to the surface we found [3] a number of fairly recent burials which belonged, it was said, to the Christian community of Sebaste who used this field as a graveyard until they were driven off it by Muslim cultivators and confined to a small knoll close by. One burial took place on the south side of the knoll while we were at work. The section of the monastery which was cleared by the expedition measured only 27 m. from north to south and about 15 m. on the average from east to west. The south boundary wall stood on the crest of the cliff ; it was

[1] P.P.T.S., *Burchard of Mt. Sion*, 1896, pp. 50–1.

[2] P.P.T.S., 1894, p. 30.

[3] In the expedition diary the following are noted :—April 1931 : 7th, one grave ; 15th, a few burials ; 16th, more burials ; 17th, a few burials including one in the thickness of an old wall—two such are shown in the plan.

built of very rough stones. The north wall which stood half way up the slope was built of old squared stones of many periods ; some Israelite stones lay at the bottom, an interesting capital was built into the foundations, and the wall



[*A. G. Buchanan*

FIG. 3.—SEBASTE: PLAN OF EXCAVATIONS ON MONASTERY SITE

had been modified again and again. The remains between these walls are a small fraction of the original complex and cannot be expected to make much sense in themselves. In the north-east corner there was a paved courtyard near a cistern with doors opening into it (No. 1 on Fig. 3). More informative was a long room to the west with a mosaic floor and an apse at the north end (No. 2). The mosaics date in all probability from the 6th or early 7th century (Plate 17*a*) ; the pattern in the middle was a lattice of eight-petalled roses and florets, and round it ran a broad plait border and an imbricated, or scale, surround. One of the five cisterns found among the ruins contained quantities of mediæval pottery and a coin of King Amaury (1162–73).

The small knoll where the Christians now bury had a dip in the middle, and the tops of three columns which were showing in the dip raised our curiosity. Fortunately there were no graves very close to the columns and so it was decided to clear them. A little work proved that the columns stood on the floor of a small church and that the walls of it were still standing about 4 m. high. It was obviously desirable to go farther and encroach on part of the area occupied by graves. Permission to do this was obtained from the Christian community, and members of the community were employed to remove all the bones which had been buried inside the church and re-bury them farther west ; some buried in the thickness of the walls and those outside the south wall we did not disturb. The interior of the church and the west end were completely cleared ; soundings were made at the east end, and the holes subsequently filled ; no excavations were made along the outer face of the north or south walls. The church itself remains open, and a plot of ground has been bought to be used by the Christians as a cemetery in exchange for the ground they have lost.

In 1932 we examined the ground lying east of the church. The remains of a tolerably orderly cemetery were found, the graves arranged in regular lines with rude crosses at the head but without inscriptions. Two which we opened contained nothing in the way of offerings. Other monastic buildings lie probably north and west of the church in areas we have not excavated. The fields now known as Aqtān el Deir, which stretch for some 220 m. along the *Lower Terrace*, may represent the former monastic estate.

3. Description and Analysis of the Church [1]

The church is entered through a porch which runs the whole length of the west wall like a narthex (*see* Plate 13*b*). There is a little rough paving in front of

[1] A preliminary account of this church was published by the writer in the P.E.F.Q.S. for January 1932, pp. 28–33.

the doorway into this porch and a column of rose granite instead of a threshold. The church inside is nearly square, 14·6 m. by 13 m., and the walls are still standing from 3 m. to 4 m. high. The remains correspond exactly in detail with the description of Phocas. The dome was carried on four piers which were composed of columns encased in masonry, and many of the stones of which it was built are still in the church. To the left of the sanctuary is the chapel which Phocas mentions, and beneath it a crypt with a painting of the Invention of the Baptist's Head and angels on either side. Crosses on the side of the door into the crypt, like those on the mediæval walls leading down to the chapel of S. Helena at Jerusalem, show that it was a place of pilgrimage, and there is a well-made hole in the vault of the chamber which may be the orifice covered by a marble circle in the time of Phocas.

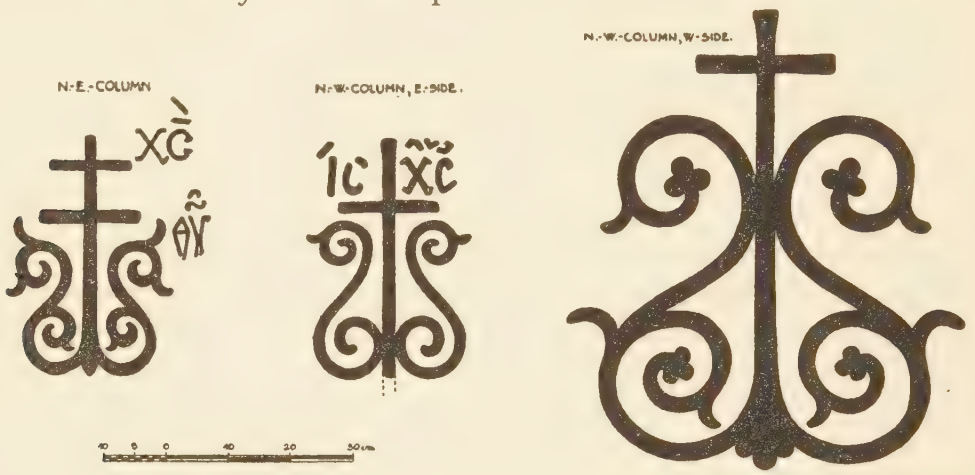
Much of what we now see dates quite clearly from the 12th century, the date when Phocas visited the site, but the church at that date was, like so many other churches in Palestine, a building with a long and complicated history : the new work of the 12th century was an addition to an old church which had been already once rebuilt.

The First Building. The earliest church of which traces have been found was of the same period as the mosaics in the monastery. Patches of similar mosaics were discovered in the porch and in the south aisle ; in the former a plain scale pattern with florets lying north to south ; in the latter a fragmentary inscription on a label in a field again decorated with florets, but in this case in outlined scales running east to west (Plate 17*b*, *c*). Other patches of plain tesseræ, probably from repairs, are shown on the plan. The inscription is too fragmentary to give an intelligible meaning, but the form of the letters points to the 6th century or thereabouts. The differences in the direction and treatment of the scales in the two patches illustrated suggest that there was a porch in front of the first church as well as later. Other remains, however, show that internally the first church was different in plan from its successors. The most noticeable of these are two stylobates which run the whole length of the church (*see* Plan, Plate 12 and Plate 13*a*) ; these were broken through by the existing columns which stood on a different line, and they were evidently laid to carry two colonnades. At the east end, on either side of the apse where the stylobates abut, the stones of the wall above are jagged, and the jagged edges are evident relics of the two responds to the colonnades. The jagged stones show further that parts of the east wall also date from the first period, as does the apse which is built in much better style than the other walls.

The first church, then, was a small basilica with a mosaic floor and a projecting apse. There is room for six columns of the appropriate size on each

stylobate if the church ended on the line of the present west wall ; two of them on either side may have been within the chancel area. Externally the apse was rectangular ; on the outside the walls had a set-back just above ground level ; on the inside a line some 38 cm. above the floor may be a relic of the *synthronus*.

The Second Building. The second building was a church of the later *four column* Byzantine type. It was built apparently towards the end of the 11th century (*see* below) after the basilica had been destroyed and its columns carried away. Of this church much more survives, though it was drastically restored or rebuilt in the course of the next hundred years. The remains which we assign to this building are the four columns inside the piers under the dome, the greater part of the three main walls on the north, south, and west sides of the church, and the oldest masonry in the west porch.



[*J. Pinkerfeld*

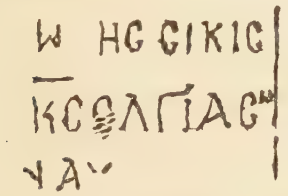
Fig. 4.—Crosses Painted on Columns

Three of the columns inside the piers are still standing (*see* Plates 13 and 14), the one at the north-east corner is lying unbroken on the floor. They are of granite and came probably from the theatre on the other side of the hill where several granite columns of the same size were found. They had been erected on marble bases which were centred inside the centre line of the old stylobates which were accordingly broken through. The shafts of the columns had floreated crosses and inscriptions painted on them in red (Fig. 4), and both paintings and bases show that the columns were meant to be seen and that the casing was a later idea. This is proved also by the character of the casing stones themselves which are tooled in a style introduced into Palestine during the 12th century. The crosses and lettering on the columns[1] might, so far as I can tell,

[1] For similar crosses and letters *see* Schlumberger, *La sigillographie byzantine, passim* ; Millet in *Bull. Corr. Hell.*, 1910, p. 104 ; Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archæology*, p. 169.

belong to any date between the 10th and 12th centuries, but the evidence of the other walls indicates in this case a date in the 11th century.

This date was given by the remains of some frescoes which were found at the north-west corner of the church. The frescoes were very badly weathered when they were uncovered and have since disappeared; they represented a row of saints over life size, five of whom were just sufficiently well preserved to show that each had been crowned with a nimbus and carried a scroll in his hands. The saints wore long tunics, two red, two yellow, one green; cloaks over the shoulders, two black, one red, one yellow; and broad black girdles, two of them with embroidered edges. Letters were visible on two only of the scrolls, and on one of these Dr. Buckler, to whom I have submitted our photographs, reads :—



[ἀποκάτ]
ῳ[τ]ῆς σικῖς . . . . . John, i. 51.
κ(ύριο)ς ὁ ἁγιάσω
ῃ αὐ[τούς] . . . . . Leviticus, xxi. 23.

The form of the letters (*see* Plate 17*d*) Dr. Buckler compares with those on a MS. of S. John Chrysostom in the Bibliothèque Nationale, which contains portraits of Nicephorus Botoniates who was emperor from 1078 to 1081.[1]

The masonry of the north and west walls of the church on which the frescoes were found is like that of the south wall, and glaringly different both from the older work at the east end and from the fine work on the casing of the piers and in other parts of the building, which can be confidently assigned to the 12th century restoration. These three walls are 1·80 m. thick and, like most mediæval walls [2] but unlike the east wall, were built to carry heavy roofs, but the masonry is poor, the stones being old stones re-used and roughly fitted; the courses on the outside are from 50 to 60 cm. high, on the inside only the three lower courses are of this height, the upper ones being built of smaller stones.

In the middle of the north wall there was a second doorway which is now in a state of collapse; it was of approximately the same size as the west door. In the south wall two cupboards or ambries, and what may have been a window. Apart from this last, which is at the best doubtful, there were no windows in the walls, and the church drew most of its light probably from windows in a drum

[1] *See* Omont, *Fac-similes des Miniatures des plus anciens Manuscrits Grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, 1902, Plates LXI–LXIV bis.

[2] Contrast, for example, the mediæval walls at Emmaus with those in the earlier church (Vincent and Abel, *Emmäus*, Plates II, III) or those in Enlart (*Les monuments des Croisés*, Plates 6 to 7) with those at Jerash or Bosra.

under the central dome. All the stones from the roof which were found in the course of the work bore indubitable marks of having been cut and dressed in the 12th century like those in the casing round the columns, so it seems likely that the earlier roof had fallen and that it was this fall in all probability which led to the restoration of the church.

The porch at the west end was originally an open arcade ; the lower courses of four piers are visible (*see* Plate 12), and as the stones in these show no trace of the later dressing we are disposed to attribute this arcade to the second period. A springer at the north-east corner proves that it was roofed with pointed cross vaults which may, however, be the work of the restorer. Traces of painted plaster remained on one of the piers and on the west wall of the church ; these, together with a vaulted tomb under the floor at the north end, a cistern south of the door, two clumsily made niches in the west wall, and a corbel from a classical architrave between the north niche and the door, may be attributed to the second period, though the corbel was reworked later. Two altar tombs (?), one north of the door, the other with an arch at the south end, we should assign to Phocas' church. The rough walling between the piers, the end walls, and the present entrance, are much later additions, built perhaps for defence.

As thus reconstructed, the second church, which, like the mediæval church at Emmaus, incorporated an earlier apse and what remained of the old floor, is typical of the churches which were built in the East during the 10th and 11th centuries. In essentials it is to be compared with the chapel of S. Helena at Jerusalem, or the Armenian church of S. James, or the church of S. Cross; it is even closer in plan to several churches in Asia Minor, such as those at Fisandün and Ala Klisse. The two latter have the same four central supports, the same niches in the thickness of the wall on either side of the apse, and the same porch, which at Ala Klisse was decorated with similar niches [1] and it is now recognised that these Anatolian churches belong to the 10th–11th centuries.[2] In this period Byzantine traditions of church planning at last began to spread both to the interior of Asia Minor and to Palestine, but in Palestine it was the *plan* only which was adopted : the masonry is poor both at Samaria and in the chapel of S. Helena, and both structures were soon to be restored.[3]

The Third Building. The poor masonry of the second church, which was hidden under a thick coat of plaster, and the free use of old architectural detail—

[1] *See* Gertrude Bell in Ramsay and Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches*, pp. 399–403, and Strzygowski in *Kleinasien*, p. 156.

[2] *See* Guyer in B.Z., 33 (1933), pp. 90, 91.

[3] *See* Vincent in Vincent and Abel, *Jérusalem*, II, pp. 132–4.

the columns, for example, the lintel and the corbel in the porch—stand in sharp contrast with the stone-laying and stone-cutting in the third church which was that seen by Phocas. In this third period the west door and the roof were remodelled, the chapel of the Invention was constructed in the north-east corner, and some of the internal fittings were renewed. At the west door a flat arch

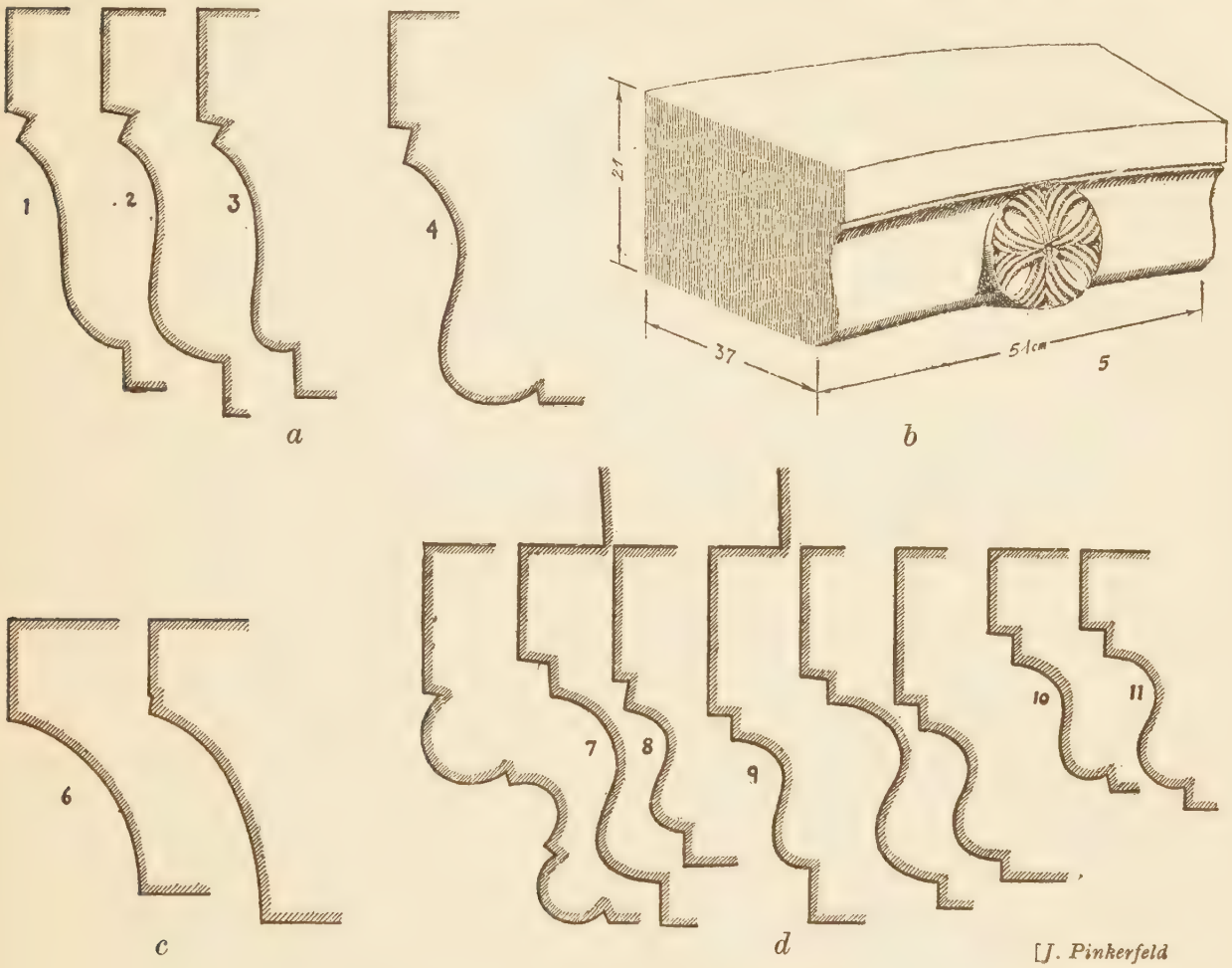


FIG. 5*a*, *b*, *c*, *d*.—PROFILES OF MOULDINGS

was built behind the old lintel, and the stones in the jambs were reset—they break joint with the courses on either side and they have the same diagonal tooling as the casing stones in the piers (Plate 15*a*). The door itself was barred by a beam which was shot into a slot in the wall 2·5 m. long in the same fashion as Crusading doors at Atlit and Sepphoris.

The roof, as we have said, was rebuilt ; all the moulded blocks and the stones

from the domes and pendentives, which were found in the debris from the roof, are dressed in the same style and came apparently from the same quarry. The profiles of the moulded stones which are shown in Fig. 5 *a*, *b*, *c*, *d* are typical of the simpler architectural work of the Crusading period in Palestine and leave no room for doubt about the date of the rebuilding. Three moulded stones (Profiles Nos. 1, 2, 3,) came from an external octagon and prove that there was an octagonal drum below the dome which was slightly ovoid on plan as was also the smaller dome over the chapel. Eight stones (Profiles Nos. 4, 5) came from a cornice round the central dome, the slab with a cross presumably from the east side, two stones (No. 6) from a plainer cornice round the dome of the chapel. Of the other mouldings on Fig. 5 three (Nos. 7, 8, 9) are still in position : they are on the imposts of the arches over the aisles between the main walls and the piers ; two others (Nos. 10, 11) came from cornices round the piers ; the original position of the others is uncertain. All the impost blocks were clearly inserted in walls, which had not been originally built to receive them ; in two cases remains of the springer above showed that the arch had been pointed.[1] There were no doubt groined vaults without ribs over the aisles like those in S. Anne's Church at Jerusalem, and two domes, one over the middle of the church, the other over the chapel of S. John ; part of the north-east pendentive of the latter is still standing (Plate 16*a* and *see* Fig. 6).

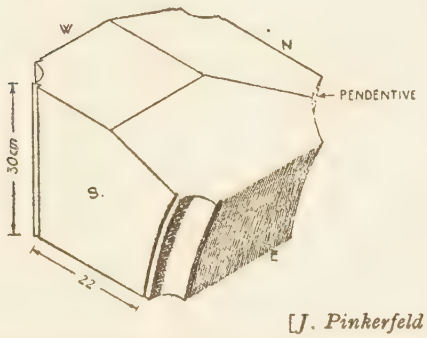


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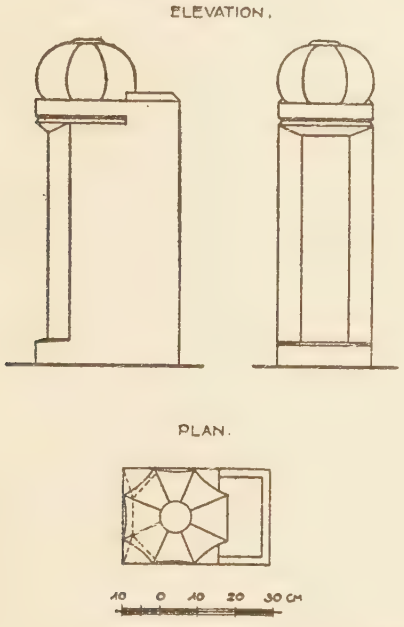
FIG. 6.—STONE FROM SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF CHAPEL

The nave of the church, the part, that is, under the main dome, had wooden seats or stalls for the monks on three sides ; slots cut low down in the four piers show how they were fitted, and holes in the stylobates corresponding with the slots suggest that there were passages between them to the aisles and at the west end. The chancel or presbytery stood on the fourth side, one step higher than the nave. The chancel screen, so far as one can judge, was of stone, about 20 cm. thick and 80 cm. high, and it was continued across the south aisle (on the level of the nave floor) as well as to the east wall on either side of the apse. The door in the middle was flanked by column drums which were oval in section, and there were side doors leading to the chapel on the north and to the south aisle ; the post on Fig. 7 was found in the porch, but seems to have belonged to the north of these doors. The presbytery was paved with flag-stones (second

[1] The profiles on these stones should be compared with the Crusading profiles from Nablus in Enlart, *o.c.*, Pl. 126.

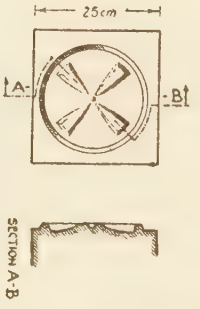
period ?) and the site and plan of the altar is clear from remains of plaster : a poor substitute of unworked stones occupied the spot when it was excavated. A line running round the apse about 38 cm. above the floor may be an indication of the *synthronus* in the first church.

The chapel of S. John and the crypt below it on the left of the altar are built in the third style : traces of the painted plaster of the second period were visible on the east wall behind the pier which was added to carry the new dome at the south-east corner ; the old north wall also was cut back to give more space for the chapel, and the new corner chamfered like the corners of the



[*J. Pinkerfeld*

FIG. 7.—PIER FROM CHANCEL SCREEN



[*J. Pinkerfeld*

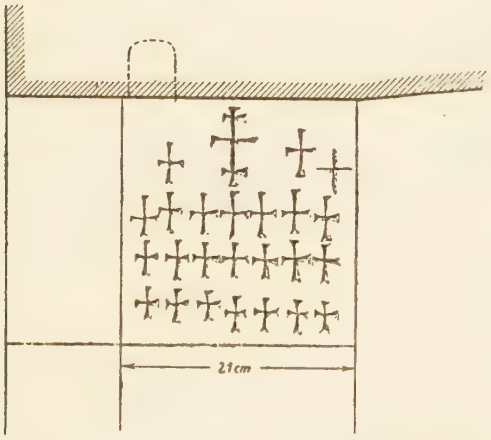
FIG. 8.—CROSS ON WALL LEADING TO CRYPT

Crusading piers at Emmaus. The chapel, as we have seen, had a dome of its own ; the floor was two steps higher than the floor of the aisle and one step above the adjoining presbytery. The stones of the floor and the steps were of admirable quality and workmanship ; the floor has disappeared in the middle just where Phocas says there was a marble circle round a hole in the roof of the crypt through which, no doubt, holy effluences ascended.

A flight of eight steps led from the north aisle into the crypt under the chapel. Above the fifth step on the right hand is a cross in a circle with traces of red paint (Fig. 8), and on the left at the bottom of the flight are the rows of crosses

already mentioned (Fig. 9).[1] The crypt has a groined rubble roof with impressions of string on the crowns of the vaults (Plate 16*b*). The south and west walls are built of stones like those used in the doorway and on the floor of the chapel above ;[2] the north and east walls which lay under the old church walls are of rubble, a mere facing stuck on the original foundations. The plaster on the floor is only the bedding of a pavement which has disappeared ; there was a rifled grave cut in the rock in the middle of it. The crypt was quite empty when we entered it except for insignificant accumulations of dust below the hole in the roof and at the foot of the steps ; the painting on the east wall was all that had survived of its former decoration, and this had been mutilated.

In the middle of the east wall there is a niche which is divided into two parts by a stone shelf like an altar slab (*see* Plates 12, 16*b*, *c*) ; both parts of the niche and the upper parts of the walls on either side are painted. The picture in the upper part of the niche represents the martyrdom of S. John ; on the left is a soldier in a scarlet tunic and a blue cloak waving from his shoulders, his right arm is stretched above the head of the bending figure of the saint who is dressed in sombre colours with head and hands turned to the right ; on the right of this are traces of a third figure, seated or kneeling, probably Salome. All the heads have been destroyed but the rim of the nimbus round the saint's head is still left. The picture under the shelf represents a rarer subject—the Invention of the Head of the Baptist ; a great dome-shaped hill, coloured yellow and sprinkled with red and blue flowers, obviously the hill of Sebaste, reaches from end to end of the picture ; on the hill are two men dressed in scarlet jerkins digging, and in the middle of a black hole which they have made is the rim of another nimbus, all again that is left of a once radiated (?) head. In the upper corners, right and left of the hill, were the heads of four figures, on the left two grave bearded personages



[*J. Pinkerfeld*

FIG. 9.—CROSSES ON CRYPT DOOR JAMB

[1] Similar crosses are also represented on one stone in a jamb of the mediæval doorway into the crypt at Eleona, Vincent and Abel, *Jérusalem*, II, Plate XXXV, 2.

[2] They recall the stonework in the additions made by the Crusaders to the Tomb of the Virgin near Gethsemane, *see* Vincent and Abel, *Jérusalem*, II, p. 822.

who look like ecclesiastics (*see* Frontispiece), on the right a younger man and woman, perhaps the donors of the chapel.[1] On the wall on either side of the niche is the figure of a kneeling angel with outstretched wings, one pointed upwards, the other down ; the colour of the angels' robes is mauve, the background green, the wings are tipped with scarlet, and the frame round the painting is also scarlet. The angels who revered the head of S. John are mentioned by Phocas, and a representation of the head being borne by angels occurred on a brass which was once in Bedfordshire in Biggleswade Church.[2]

Much as these paintings have all suffered, the colours are still brilliant and enough remains to give some idea of the style. The scenes are painted with the serious expressiveness which is characteristic of Eastern art, but there is life and vigour in the attitude of the diggers, and charm in the pose of the angels. Professor Hermanin compared the diggers with the small figures in the picture of the story of Sisinnius in S. Clemente which is generally attributed, I believe, to the 12th century, but it must be left to experts on Oriental painting to say whether they are of the same date as the stonework. The arrangement of the figures in the scene of the Invention is not like any of those prescribed in the late iconographies.[3]

Whatever the date assigned to these paintings, there can be no doubt that all that is best in both church and chapel dates from the second half of the 12th century, the time when the splendid Latin Cathedral was in building at the other end of Sebaste. The fine stonework in the Greek Church was almost certainly executed by masons of the same school. This is not surprising, for the Emperor Manuel Comnenus (1143–80) was co-operating at this very time with the Latins in the restoration of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem.[4] This emperor rebuilt the monastery of the Baptist in the Jordan valley, and it is conceivable that he may have contributed towards our church, though in that case it is strange that Phocas who refers to the emperor should not have mentioned the fact.

Phocas was happy in the moment of his visit ; he saw the church at its best, perhaps while work was still continuing. It is fortunate too that he was a Greek in communion with the monks for whom it was built, otherwise he might

[1] The faces of the two ecclesiastics were destroyed by someone who forced the lock on the door which was fixed above the steps when we left. Our frontispiece is from a watercolour made by Miss Muriel Bentwich during the excavation, and the illustration on Plate 16*c* from a crayon study made also by Miss Bentwich.

[2] *See* an article by R. Griffin in the *Antiquaries Journal*, XVI, 1936, p. 285.

[3] *See* Didron, *Christian Iconography*, 1886, II, p. 365.

[4] *See* Abel in Vincent and Abel, *Bethléem*, 1914, pp. 157 f., and Schneider in *Römische Quartalschrift*, 1931, p. 308.

have heard no more about the Invention of the Head than Burchard and Poloner seem to have done.

4. Later History of the Church

At some date after the 12th century the church appears to have been more or less wrecked and subsequently repaired in a feeble way.

The earlier altar was replaced by a rude pile of rough stones. The screen was removed bodily and one of the posts re-used in a flight of steps in the porch. The north side of the flight leading to the crypt has been clumsily rebuilt. The openings in the north and south walls and half the west door were blocked up. In the south-west corner a low room was constructed (*see* Plate 14*b*) ; it was used at one time as a kitchen, and remains of the fireplace and cooking pots were found on the floor. Against the south wall a flight of steps, now removed, was built to give access to the roof over this room. In the north-west corner rough parti-walls forming another room were found.

At the west end poor walls were built between the remains of the piers in the porch, and a doorway was made in the west wall ; the jambs of this door were built of re-used Crusading stones and the same arrangements made for barring it as in the main west door. The arched tomb against the south wall of the porch had partly collapsed and some steps were built up in front of it.

Like similar additions found in other churches, some of these changes were made for defensive purposes, when the community was weak ; others to adapt the building to private use. A great deal has been carried away in comparatively recent times, for the Christians evidently regarded it not only as a burial ground but also as a profitable quarry to be exploited exclusively by themselves.

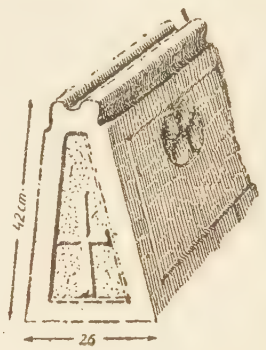
5. Minor Finds

(*a*) Of the minor finds made on the site the most interesting is the stone shown on Fig. 10. The stone comes from a tomb of a type which was widely popular in the 12th century. It is the type of tomb under which Godfrey de Bouillon and his brother Baldwin I were buried at Jerusalem—" Les tombeaux des deux princes affectaient la même forme : un sarcophage rectangulaire placé directement sur le sol, surmonté d'un bloc taillé en prisme triangulaire allongé, porté sur quatre ou cinq colonettes torses. Une croix pattée ornait les deux tympans." [1] The fragment at Sebaste comes, of course, from the prism at the top, which is supposed to have represented a wooden hearse or frame with hangings over it ; Viollet le Duc who discusses the type (*s.v.* Tombeaux) quotes

[1] Vincent and Abel, *Jérusalem*, II, p. 280.

an example in the Beauchamp Chapel at Warwick, and another which was once in the abbey of Noailles. The long side of our stone which is not shown in the drawing is rough and the tomb therefore probably rested against a wall. More than two-thirds of the original stone have disappeared, and there may have been an inscription in the middle of the long side which is carved.

Other " Western " finds which may be mentioned in this connection are small fragments of two Crusader capitals and a block with some undecipherable Gothic letters painted on it. It is difficult to see how the capitals can have been utilised in the church (unless perhaps on the chancel screen), and it is conceivable that all these stones were carried away from the Latin Cathedral.



[*J. Pinkerfeld*

FIG. 10.—FRAGMENT OF TOMBSTONE

(*b*) Other stones which cannot be related to the 12th century church are parts of two large Corinthian capitals (one of them is visible on Plate 13*b*), an Ionic capital, and some heavy corbels, the last of which may have been used in the first church.

(*c*) A series of Armenian graffiti which were incised in stone or plaster on and near the apse are interesting in virtue of the reference to Sebaste in the Armenian Synaxary (*see* p. 24, note 2). They were studied on the spot by Professor R. P. Blake who writes :—

> " For the most part these are written in minuscule (bolorgir) and not in capitals (ardzanagir). The names of Matt'eos and T'oros (Theodore) are mentioned, but such of the graffiti as are decipherable contain merely pious ejaculations. The most frequent of these is *Kendani Khac'*, the living cross. From the general character of the letters these graffiti would seem to be rather late, probably after the 13th century, but there is not sufficient material to venture a closer chronological approximation."

(*d*) The miscellaneous small finds included fragments of glass: some blue, some wine-coloured, from window-panes 22 to 24 cm. in diameter, some with fold-over edges, and one piece still in its stucco frame. Also fragments of glass lamps of the " bowl with stem," " beaker," and " handled cup " types ; [1] fragments of metal lamp suspenders ; and fragments of two stone bread moulds, one of which had letters of the Eucharistic words, " Take, eat," λά]βετε φάγετε.

[1] For the forms, *see* an article by Grace M. Crowfoot and D. B. Harden in the *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, XVII (1931), Plates xxviii–xxx.

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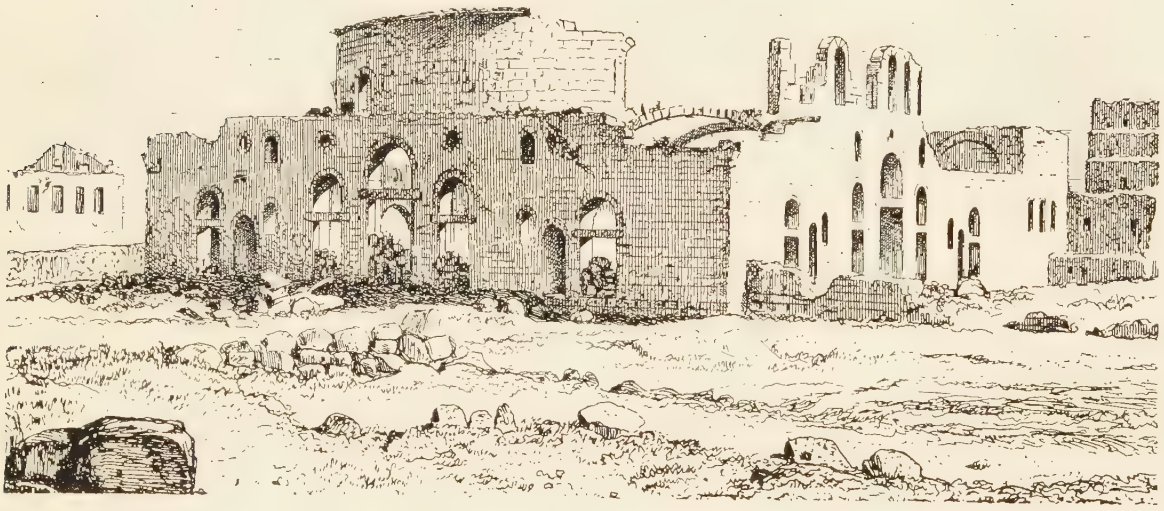
PLATE I

BOSRA CATHEDRAL FROM THE SOUTH-WEST

(*a*) A photograph taken by an American expedition in 1875.

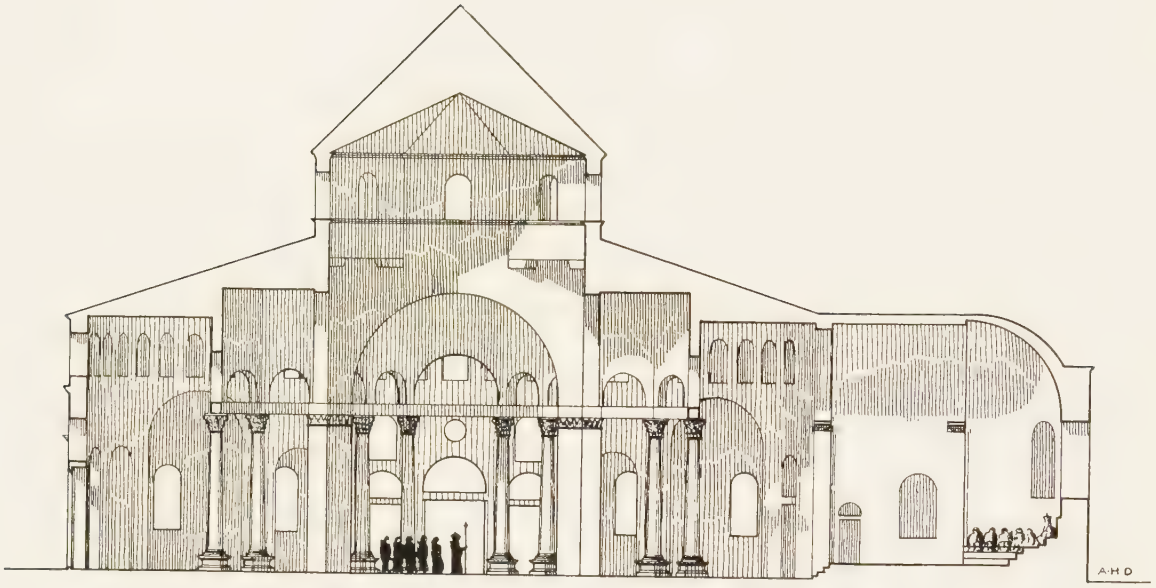


(*b*) A sketch by M. de Vogüé in 1862.

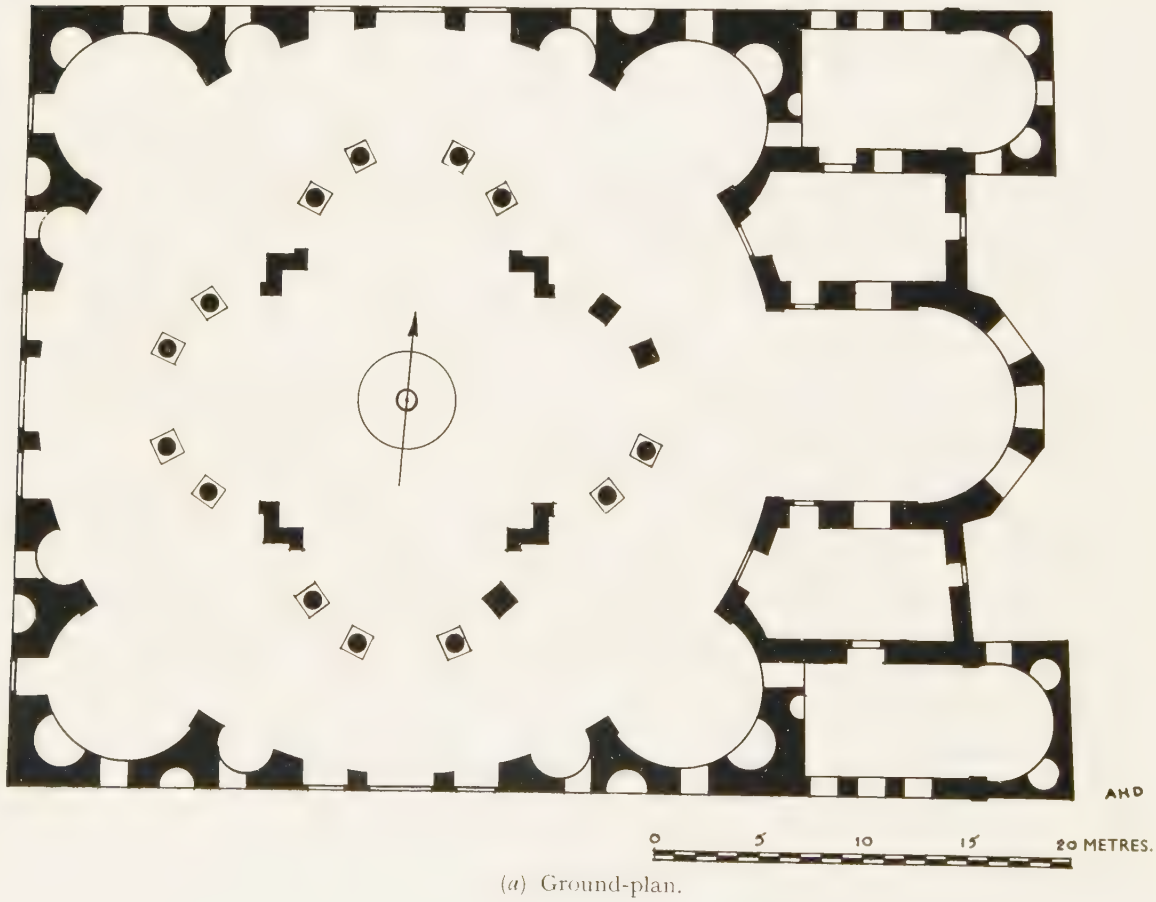
(*c*) A restoration by A. H. Detweiler.

PLATE 2

BOSRA CATHEDRAL



(*b*) Longitudinal section. (Both by A. H. Detweiler.)



(*a*) Ground-plan.

PLATE 3

BOSRA CATHEDRAL

(*a*) The south wall from the south-west.

(*b*) The same from closer.

PLATE 4

BOSRA CATHEDRAL

(*a*) The east wall.

(*b*) The apse.

(*c*) The north-west corner.

(*d*) The west niche on the north wall, inside

(*e*) The east niche on the north wall, after clearance.

PLATE 5

BOSRA CATHEDRAL INTERIOR, LOOKING EAST

(*a*) From the south wall to the north passage room.

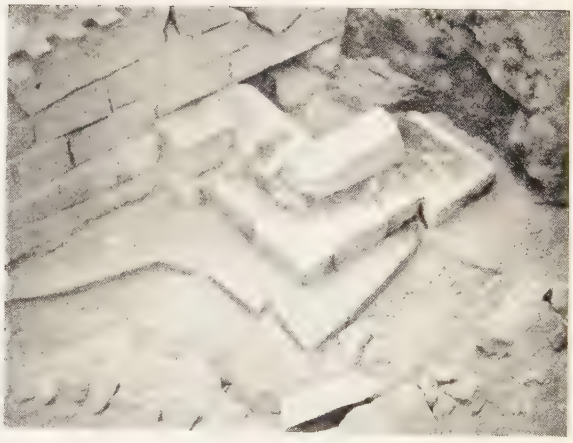
(*b*) From the south side of the chancel to the north wall.

BOSRA CATHEDRAL EXCAVATIONS, 1935

(*a*) Main trench, from east, showing north wall of chapel in centre, with foundations of pier on right and pedestal on left.

(*b*) The pier from east.

(*c*) The corner of the pier with the line of the colonnade running under the chapel wall, from north-west.



(*d*) The pier from the north-east.

(*e*) The pier from above.

(*f*) Two columns in the chapel, the right column standing on old pedestal still in place, from north.

PLATE 7

Bosra Cathedral

(*a*) Lower part of pedestal found in south colonnade in 1934, still in place.

(*b*) Lower part of pedestal found in south colonnade in 1934, still in place.

(*c*) Upper part of pedestal re-used in foundation of south wall of chapel, 1934.

(*d*, *e*) Complete pedestal in east colonnade found in 1935.

PLATE 8

BOSRA CATHEDRAL

(*a*) Upper half of capital.

(*b*) Base of columns in the colonnades.

(*c*)

(*d*)

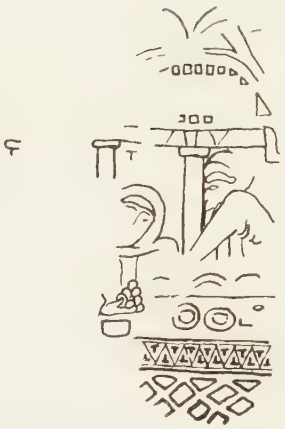
(*e*)

(*f*)

(*c, d, e, f*) Stones previously re-used in a frieze above the colonnades.

BOSRA CATHEDRAL

(*a*) Fresco on the south wall of the chancel.



(*b*) Explanatory sketch of the fresco.

(*c*) Old cornice block rebuilt into north-west corner.

(*d*) Cornice block used as impost under the apse arch on the north wall of the chancel.

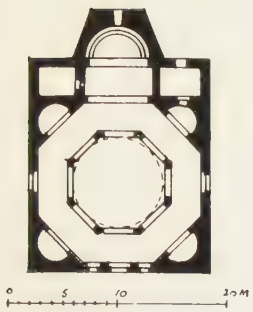
(*e*) Block found in debris like that in *c*.

(*a*) Two glass vessels found in grave in centre of chapel at Bosra.

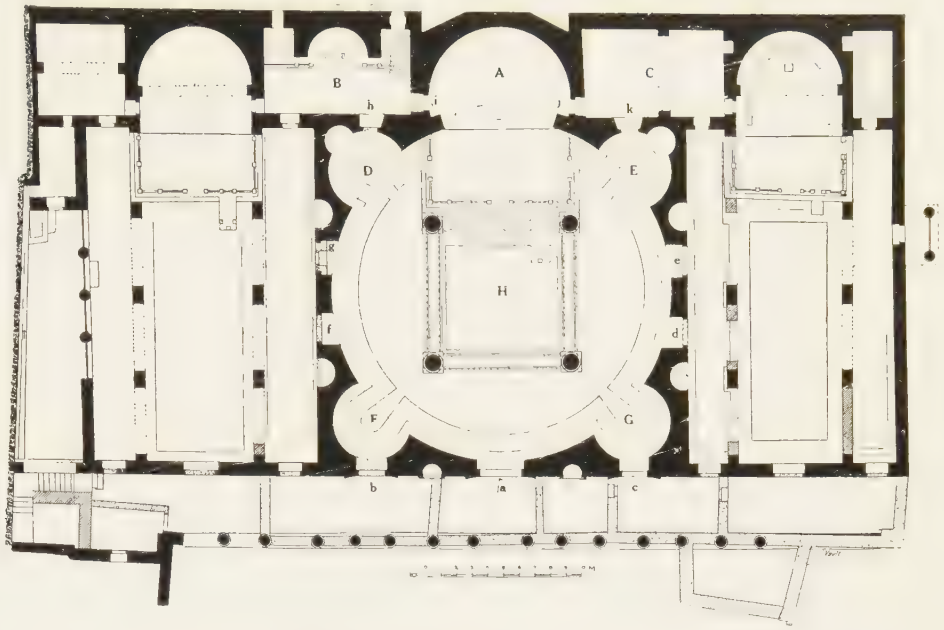
(*b*) View of larger vessel to show arabesque on shoulder.

PLANS FOR COMPARISON WITH BOSRA CATHEDRAL

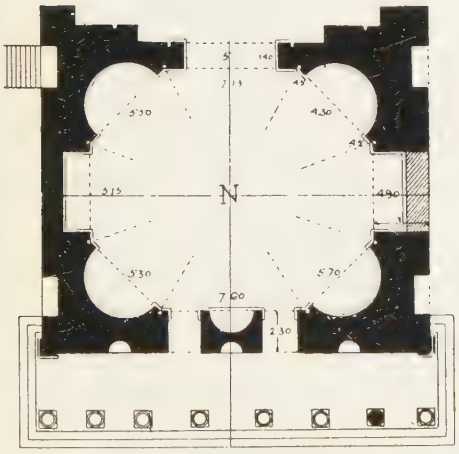
(*a*) Room in forum bath at Pompeii.



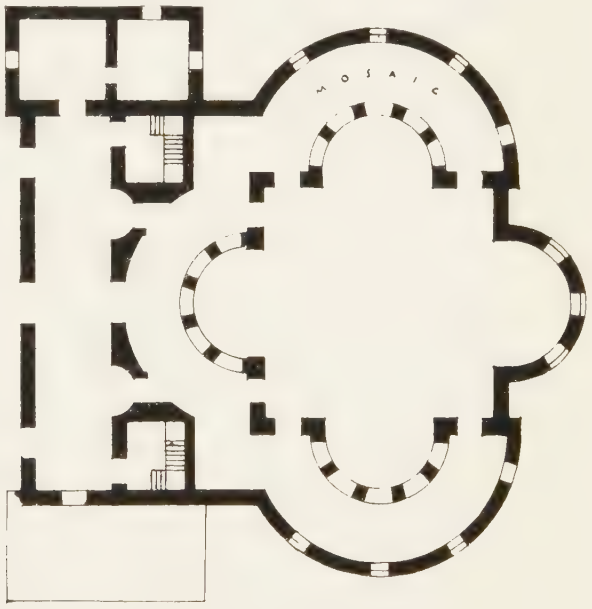
(*b*) Church of S. George at Ezra', after M. de Vogüé.



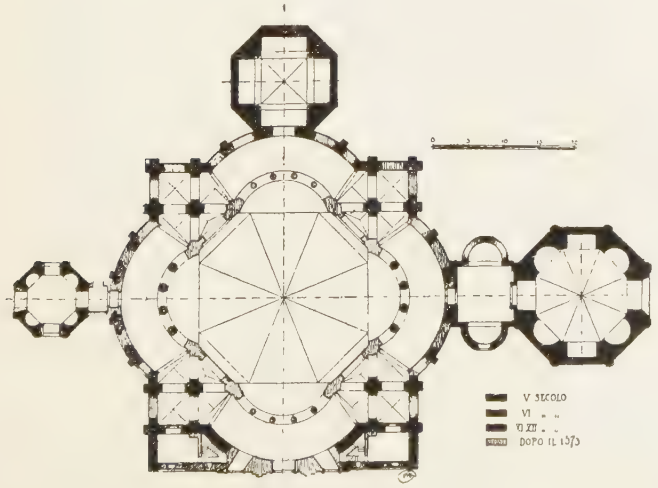
(*c*) Church of S. John the Baptist at Jerash, after C. S. Fisher.



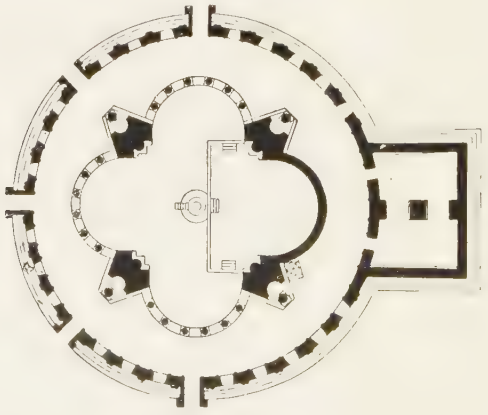
(*d*) Room in south baths at Bosra, after Butler.



(*e*) Building in stoa of Hadrian at Athens, after Sisson.

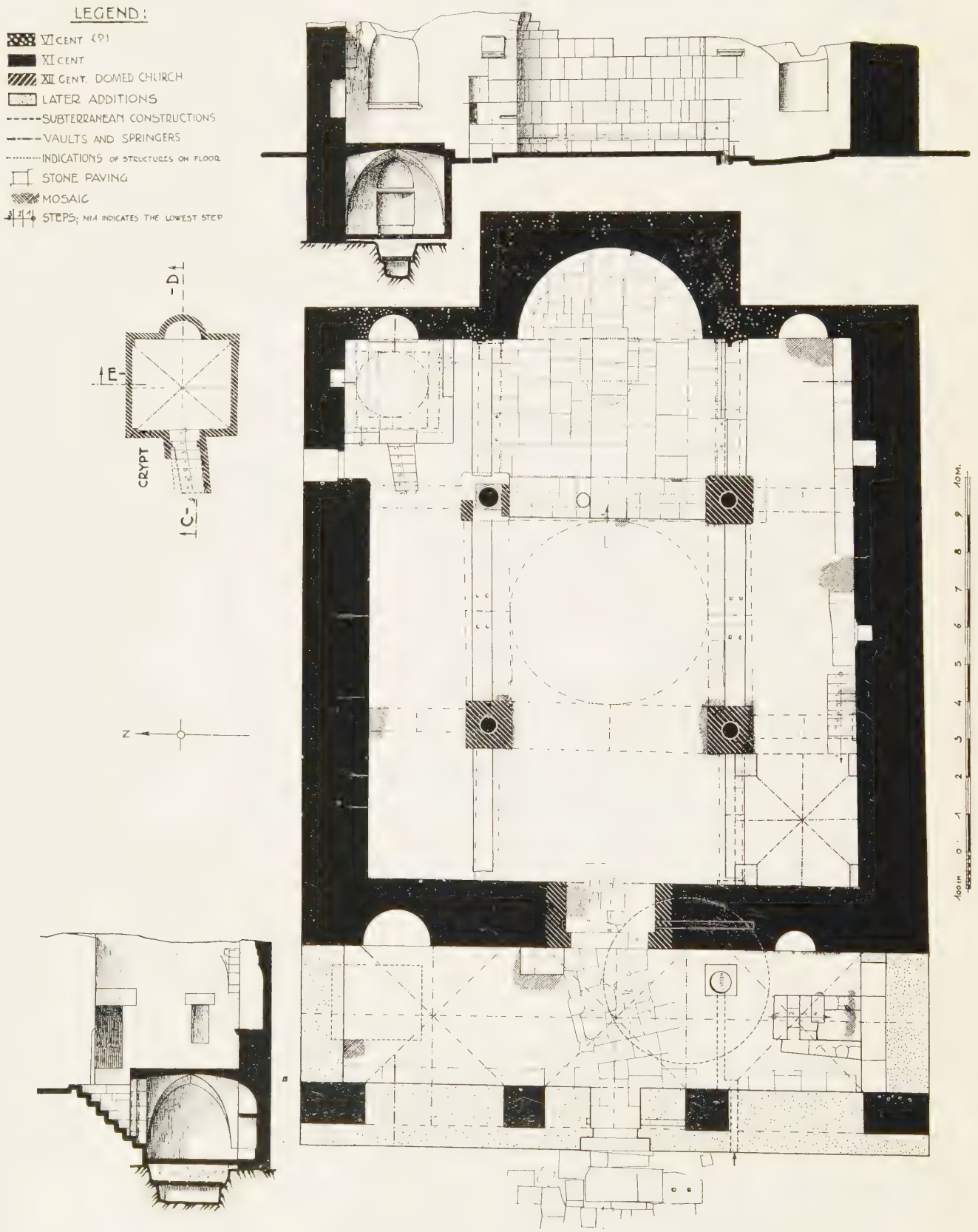


(*f*) Church of S. Lorenzo at Milan.



(*g*) Patriarchal church at Zwarthnotz (*f* and *g* by courtesy of the Royal Institute of British Architects).

Sebaste, the Greek Church of S. John the Baptist, Ground-plan



On right, *above*, section north–south near east end; on left, *above*, plan of crypt; *below*, section of crypt through centre from east to west. (All by J. Pinkerfeld.)

SEBASTE

(*a*) View of church from north-west.

(*b*) View of porch from north.

SEBASTE

(*a*) View of church from west.

(*b*) View from east.

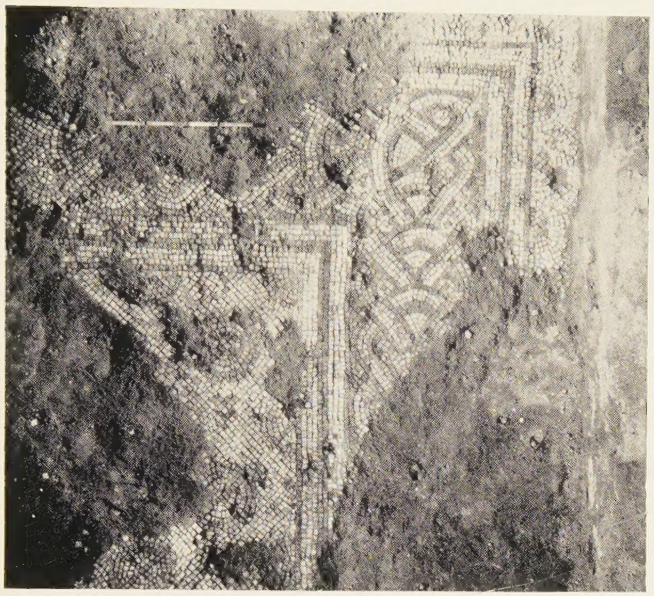
(*a*) Doorway into porch with west door beyond.

(*b*) Doorway and steps into crypt from the south-east.

(*a*) Chapel of S. John the Baptist at north-east corner of the church.

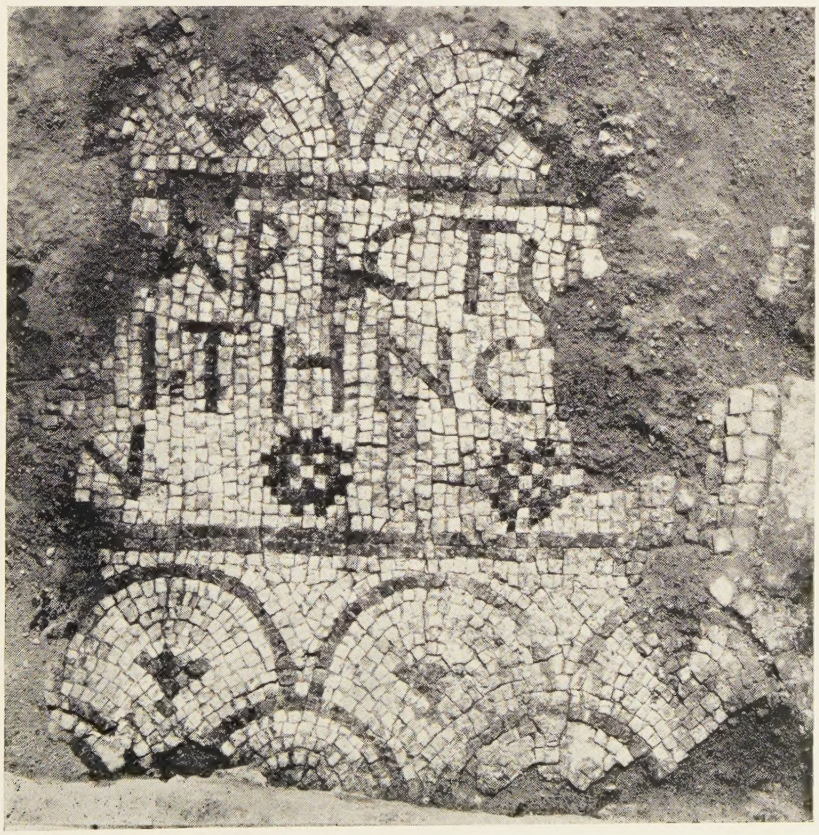
(*b*) View of east wall of the crypt under the chapel with traces of fresco.

(*c*) Photograph of a study of the fresco, by Muriel Bentwich.

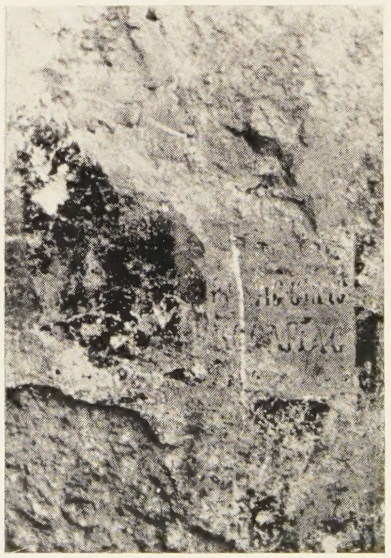


(*a*) Mosaics in the monastery, room 2.

(*b*) Mosaics in the porch.



(*c*) Mosaics in the south aisle of the church.



(*d*) A scroll carried by a saint on a fresco on the north wall of the church.